

U.S. Department of Education
2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Tess Blumenthal

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

Official School Name Urbana Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3400 Stone Barn Drive

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

Frederick MD 21704-7787
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Frederick County

Telephone (240) 236-2200

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Web site/URL https://education.fcps.org/ues/

E-mail tess.blumenthal@fcps.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Theresa Alban

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail Theresa.Alban@fcps.org

District Name Frederick County Public Schools Tel. (301) 644-5000

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Brad Young

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 36 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 13 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 10 High schools
 - 7 K-12 schools
- 66 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	8	17	25
K	46	45	91
1	55	50	105
2	55	51	106
3	51	52	103
4	61	74	135
5	78	74	152
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	354	363	717

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 18 % Asian
 - 7 % Black or African American
 - 9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 59 % White
 - 6 % 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: 8%

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	46
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	61
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	722
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
29 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Amharic/Ethiopian, Arabic, Bengali, Chin, Chinese, Mandarin, Farsi/Persian/Dari, French, Ga/Adangnie/Krobo, German, Gujarati/Gujarathi, Hindi, Korean, Marathi, Nepali, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog/Filipino, Tamil, Telugu, Vietnamese, Yoruba

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 9 %
 Total number students who qualify: 62

8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
66 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>8</u> Autism | <u>5</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>11</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>21</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	30
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	22
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24:1

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	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Urbana Elementary is committed to preparing all students to meet the ever-changing needs of a global, technologically savvy society by learning today and leading tomorrow.

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

When Urbana Elementary School (UES) opened its doors in 1960, Urbana was a rural community. Farms and fields surrounded the school. Today Urbana is a fast-growing suburb filled with shops, restaurants and busy roads; yet our rural roots and Frederick County's rich history still contribute to our identity as a community school. It is that community of parents, educators, students, and volunteers who make it possible to accomplish our mission to "awaken in all students an intellectual curiosity that will lead to achievement." At UES, we are committed to fostering critical and creative thinking, strong personal responsibility, and loving and respectful relationships so that all students can be engaged in meaningful learning experiences.

UES now has over 700 students spread across a sprawling campus that includes 14 portables. Next year, we are moving to a new building while our current building is replaced with a state of the art building where we can all be under one roof. UES serves a diverse population of learners from all over the world and we are also a magnet site for the Advanced Academics Program. UES offers our students many opportunities to strive and stretch their minds through the effective use of technology, growth mindset, Soaring with Pride recognition program, and a registered Wetlands that supports Outdoor Education.

UES implements the philosophy of "growth mindset" based on the concepts of Carol Dweck's book. Staff members incorporate "growth mindset" in classrooms and inspire students to persevere when challenged. Teachers engage students with concepts including My Favorite Mistake, productive struggle, and lessons about the brain. Our students are resilient learners who have stamina and can persevere.

Together, families, teachers, students and community members attend events during and after school. During STEM and Literacy nights students share talents and families learn together in innovative ways. For STEM nights, students share their learning through projects and our budding scientists experience hands-on learning in chemistry, physics and engineering. Outside groups that promote stewardship of wildlife and other natural resources also attend. Literacy nights may include hosting a local author or a Family Readers Theatre Evening. The Multicultural Fair is a UES favorite as we have a diverse population of families who relocate here from all over the world. Our sharp focus on students unites us.

We also give back to our local community and communities in need. Each year our school organizes two food drives: in the fall to help fill the Urbana Food Bank during the holidays and again in the spring through Helping Hoops. Two local elementary schools host a basketball game and food drive to bring the entire community together. During the months of November and December, we collect food, clothing, holiday gifts and warm apparel to assist our UES families in need. We also sponsor a weekly Blessing in a Backpack program to provide weekend nutrition. We participate in Socktober and Jump Rope for Heart each year. This year we collected coins to help hurricane victims in Florida and Puerto Rico. Our students are involved in supporting others.

UES students foster a welcoming and inclusive school climate. The H.A.W.K. (Helping All With Kindness) Kids Club is comprised of third - fifth grade students. Their vision: We will work together to promote a culture of kindness around our school community through our actions, words, creativity, and our own hard work. We strive to make everyone at UES feel important, respected, and appreciated. We also promote positive interactions between all students through our student newspaper The Hawk Times, Buddy Classes between grade levels, Character Counts awards, Soaring with Pride awards, and attendance awards. During Kindness Week students act as Kindness Secret Agents to spread kindness in the school. Students create banners, bookmarks, and positive, inspiring messages. School climate is actively focused on at UES.

The Parent-Teacher Association is very active at UES and supports students and staff. Countless hours have been logged by volunteers and the PTA sponsors many events throughout the year. Every spring, the Maryland Mobile Science Lab comes to UES for two weeks to provide students with hands-on learning experiences that follow the scientific method to explore a topic. Parents and grandparents are invited to enjoy breakfast with their child during events such as Muffins with Mom, Donuts with Dad, and Grandparents Breakfast. Families are also invited to evening events such as BINGO night, movie nights, and The Snowball Family Social. A long-standing tradition at UES is the PTA's annual Strawberry Festival held

every year in May. Our PTA enthusiastically supports our school.

We are honored and excited to be a Maryland Blue Ribbon School and proud of our nomination to become a National Blue Ribbon School. This accolade has only made our commitment stronger. We look forward to continuing our school's traditions and are excited to grow in ways that will continue to positively impact our school and community. Urbana Hawks soar with pride!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) develops their own curriculum aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Each summer, FCPS teachers work to review, revise, and develop our curriculum in all content areas. Many UES teachers participate in these curricula writing workshops. Throughout all content areas relevant and rigorous curriculum is supported by an FCPS designed website, Curriculum Now. Suggested curriculum pacing guides, strategies, assessments (both pre and summative), as well as a multitude of resources are available. Our curriculum in all content areas targets important skills, strategies, critical thinking, and problem solving through direct instruction, collaborative work, discussion, and independent work.

Reading/English Language Arts (ELA)

All students are engaged in instruction on Reading Informational text, Reading Literary text, Reading Foundational Skills, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. Students analyze complex texts, discuss, collaborate, and write responses to text. A variety of texts are used and cross curriculum sources embedded into ELA are encouraged. Our FCPS ELA curriculum is heavily influenced by the work of Irene Fountas and Su Gay Pinnell. Our approach to teaching of reading is through the guided reading model. Students are assessed frequently to monitor progress in fluency and comprehension. All grade levels have seed lessons available with corresponding mini-lessons, differentiated resources, and sequential lessons. Fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies are specifically addressed. Writing lessons are based on the work of Lucy Calkins and specifically taught sequential lessons assist our students in becoming strong writers in multiple content areas. Students have direct instruction and opportunities for creative expression with narrative, expository, opinion-based, and other types of writing to support their application of grammar skills, vocabulary, and word study.

Mathematics

We support all students with math proficiency based on the Common Core Standards. Our students demonstrate conceptual understanding with a deep knowledge- more than memorizing facts and algorithms. Students exhibit strategic competence so they can formulate problems, represent problems, and solve them. Students can use adaptive reasoning and can consider alternatives, justify responses, and relate concepts to one another. Our students can demonstrate procedural fluency by performing a variety of procedures accurately. Students are engaged in direct instruction, work in small groups, and with technology through the Ten Marks software program. County designed units in the areas of Algebra, Patterns and Functions, Geometry, Measurement, Statistics, Probability, and Number Relationships and Computation provide our teachers instructional focus. Standards of Mathematical Practice (SMP) are embedded in daily instruction. A widely used resource is Go Math. During instruction teachers at all grade levels use a variety of manipulatives and differentiate math instruction through flexible groups based on pre-assessments and formatives. Number talks are used to introduce, re-teach, and present challenge concepts. Students are engaged in productive struggle and work in small groups creating problems to solve as well as solving problems. All students have opportunities for extension and enrichment instruction. Students help monitor their own mathematical learning through unpacking standards – interpreting standards into “kid friendly” language, knowing what the learning goals are and identifying the success criteria.

Science

Our Science curriculum for grades K-2 is based on the Maryland Voluntary State Science Curriculum and for grades 3-5 the curriculum is based on the Maryland State Science Standards. To build understanding emphasis is on laboratory investigations and experiments, scientific reading, technology and problem solving. Connections to English Language Arts Standards are clearly identified for each grade and cross cutting concepts and practices in science and engineering are also integrated in the reading, writing, and math curricular areas. Our FCPS curriculum covers the scientific areas of Earth/space science, life science, and physical sciences. Our county embeds the Maryland State STEM Standards of Practice into grade level lessons. Teachers take resources from county curricular maps and develop them to meet the needs of students. Our school takes advantage of the FCPS Science Center which provides a variety of living

organisms and other materials that support active engagement with science lessons. Students in grades 1-5 attend yearly programs at our FCPS Earth & Space Science Laboratory. This is a specialized facility, including a planetarium, which supports each grades' earth/space science units. Our school has a registered Wetlands as part of our property. This supports further hands-on engagement and real world application.

Social Studies

Our FCPS Social Studies curriculum promotes students' understanding of their families, school, community, country, and world as they become aware of their roles as responsible citizens. Grade level curriculum develops historic, cultural, geographic, and economic knowledge. Lessons integrate reading, writing and research skills to promote independent learners. Interactive websites, field trips, and collaborative projects are embedded throughout each grade's curriculum such as virtual field trips, Maryland Historical Society's "traveling trunks", Mystery Skype and BreakOut EDU boxes. Lessons integrate all content area concepts to help students make real world connections with the Social Studies standards. Students in grades Kindergarten through third grade are focused on their community and students in grades four and five extend into the study of Maryland and American history and global impact. Digital citizenship is emphasized through our Media Center curriculum and global citizenship through our Social Studies program. Students are involved in a variety of school and community based service projects to support responsible citizenship throughout their years at UES.

Pre-Kindergarten

Our Inclusive Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program serves both three and four year olds in a half-day session with three year olds in the morning and four year olds in the afternoon. A dual certified Special Educator / Early Childhood Educator and Special Education Instructional Assistants provide an inclusive model where 50% are students experiencing specialized needs with an Individual Education Program and 50% are students "typically developing." Each session has 14 students. These diverse classes provide a strong language based program for students with special needs. Curriculum accentuates communication, writing, and early literacy. The program follows the College Career Readiness Standards with appropriate modifications in place based on individualized student needs. A well-developed foundation for social and emotional well-being is emphasized. Math follows the same standards as general education Pre-K classes and a 30 minute math block is scheduled daily along with integrated Science and Social Studies times. Students leave with a strong readiness in phonics, comprehension, writing, and phonemic awareness as well as foundational math concepts and skills. Students develop a strong sense of empathy for peers and leadership skills. Our Pre-K boasts 100% inclusion rates for learners with special needs entering the Kindergarten environment.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Urbana Elementary School offers our students a variety of learning experiences outside the classroom setting. All students in Kindergarten through grade 5 participate weekly in physical education, art, and music classes. Each class session is forty minutes and is taught by a teacher certified in that discipline. All students also attend a weekly forty-minute session in our Media Center. All these specials areas connect to grade level content areas of literacy, math, science, and social studies. Our specials teachers communicate frequently with grade level teachers to stay current on what is being taught in the classrooms.

Our fine arts departments are committed to nurturing the whole child through a rigorous, standards-based curriculum. Our teachers are dedicated to challenging students to find real world connections, linking to classroom content areas, and creating lifelong interest in the arts. Our students enjoy creating personal masterpieces, often based on characteristics and elements from famous artists, which are proudly displayed throughout our building. Our music program has a unique opportunity for all third, fourth, and fifth graders to learn to play the ukulele. Through a differentiated and creative approach to instruction infused with technology, students have access to an arts education which fosters artistic literacy, creativity, and self-expression.

Additional opportunities in music include chorus in grades 3-5 and instrumental music for students in grades 4-5. Our chorus is an extension of our school day and meets weekly. This group has performances for our school body, evening concerts for parents, and for the community at feeder chorus concerts (all elementary

schools that will attend Urbana High School participate). In addition, students in grade 5 can audition in the winter to be one of six students selected from our school to be in the county wide Elementary Honors Chorus and work with a guest conductor. Instrumental music lessons are available through band or orchestra for students in grades 4 and 5. Students attend a weekly forty-minute lesson during the school day. Students and their parents self-select their instruments. Lessons focus on complex rhythms, melodic and harmonic elements, vocabulary and symbols. The students perform concerts for our school and for our feeder. The study of music infuses math and literacy in all they do. Musical opportunities abound at UES.

The Physical Education teachers work to develop a community of fit, skilled, and knowledgeable students who value an active lifestyle, embody the spirit of pure sportsmanship, practice positive character traits, and pursue activity throughout life. FCPS has a curriculum in physical education specific to each grade with designated skills, concepts, and outcomes. These goals are reached through a differentiated approach where all students achieve. Students acquire and integrate knowledge as well as develop individual skills through use of technology – such as videotaping themselves throwing a ball or bowling and then reviewing and self-analyzing, practical application- planning activities based on an outcome, and critical thinking-working with a team to analyze and plan. Our spring field day is always a favorite event where all students participate in a variety of activities. Students at UES participate yearly in Jump Rope for Heart and our Fun Run for Education. Students in grades 4 and 5 are eligible to participate in a county level cross country meet in the Fall and a county track and field meet in the Spring. Both these events are with students from every elementary school in our county.

The school media center at UES supports the system wide mission of working together to educate each child and promote success. Our school's media program provides instruction based on a county level curriculum which integrates grade level curriculum with learning outcomes in the areas of literacy, independent learning, and socially responsible use of information and technology. During their weekly media sessions, the students learn about resources in a variety of ways- how to locate, retrieve, and analyze information, take notes, and cite sources. Students learn to self-select books of choice and above all enjoy the pleasure of reading. All grade levels participate in innovative makerspace activities including coding, creative and critical thinking, and problem solving opportunities. Our media center supports our Bring Your Own Device initiative. After learning about being responsible digital citizens, students are welcome, with parent permission, to bring their own devices for instructional purposes. In our media center, students learn a variety of skills and concepts that support them today and in their futures.

Students have access to technology through classroom devices as well as two computer labs available for classroom use. All classes visit our computer labs weekly. The labs provide teachers the opportunity to introduce software applications or programs so that the entire class can work on them together. Students also work collaboratively on projects in the computer labs. All classrooms have computer access, but not enough for each student. Each classroom also has a Promethean board which allows our teachers to integrate technology throughout each content area daily. Our labs provide access for thirty students each. We have a user support specialist who supports technology in our building.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

UES students learn through a variety of classroom experiences, research based and innovative instructional practices, and by embedding learning targets and success criteria into all lessons. Classroom groupings are created in the spring for the next year with an emphasis on multiple academic groups, with like strengths and needs, in heterogeneous classrooms. This paves the way for students to have enrichment opportunities in all classrooms. On a daily basis, many teachers use exit tickets, comprised of one or two problems, to gauge the success of students on a specific skill. This information is then used to adjust instruction for the next day. Student led classrooms where the teacher's role is to guide and coach students through multiple step activities can be observed. Students take ownership of their learning and understand that the task at hand may be complex, but they must persevere and apply a growth mindset at all times.

All grade levels are given weekly opportunities to collaborate and plan with one another. During their grade level meetings, teachers discuss students' strengths, needs, and concerns. If there is a student concern, the team will suggest tier one interventions that the teacher should infuse for a particular subject area, emotional

need, or behavioral issue. The Literacy Specialist, Math Specialist, School Counselor, Media Specialist, Administrators, and Primary Talent Development Specialist are also resources to support teachers in reaching all learners. During quarterly “kid talks,” specialists along with team members collaborate with teachers on additional tier one interventions, extra supports, or enrichment to incorporate into their students’ learning day. Student services team meetings are held monthly. During these meetings, teachers will present to administration and the team of specialists on what tier one interventions they have used along with data to support their findings. From there, additional tier one strategies may be encouraged or it may be determined that a student needs an intensive intervention that is either research or evidence based such as for a reading intervention, Fountas and Pinnell’s Leveled Literacy Intervention. Entering and exiting intervention groups is an ongoing and flexible process. Our school’s Primary Talent Development Specialist supports our teachers in creating Highly Able Action Plans for those students who are highly able and without a designated peer group in their class. For an extension in reading, Junior Great Books may be used. Flexible groupings and instructional rotations in math provide opportunities for re-teaching with tier one strategies, enriching with problem solving tasks, and implementing blended learning using software programs such as TenMarks, which assesses and adjusts to each student’s level of math success. For both reading and math, a variety of data sources are used to guide instruction and implement interventions. Assessment is an integral component of this process and instructional decisions are constantly evolving. Decisions are based on information gathered formally and informally from FCPS county benchmarks in Reading and Math, formal and informal observations, anecdotal notes, grade level common formatives, units based on current learning outcomes, running records, and more. Data talks are common practice at Urbana Elementary. We review individual students’ progress, classroom progress, grade level progress, and student groups at a school and county level. This data allows us to make decisions to move all students forward and ensure progress. Services that are implemented to meet the needs of students may include extension and enrichment opportunities, double doses of guided instructional groups, push-in and pull-out re-teach groups, and or an evidence or research based intervention. These services are provided by classroom teachers, interventionists, English Language teacher, special education teachers, and specialists. All staff members take ownership for all students’ progress.

At Urbana Elementary, the teachers are positive, flexible, and willing to take risks to reach all learners. We emphasize a growth mindset, the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and Success Criteria and Learning goals to best support our students. Teachers, through their student learning objectives, identify students based on pre-assessments as a focus for targeted instruction in essential areas of English language arts or math. This targeted approach has been instrumental in identifying students early and closing instructional gaps. Instructional methods, interventions, and assessments are geared towards the needs of diverse learners. Teachers, specialists, interventionists, and administrators make decisions based on data, the diverse needs of students, and instructional practices that improve student achievement.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Our Jr. Hawks soar proudly at Urbana Elementary! Teachers at UES create a safe, warm, and nurturing learning environment where students are encouraged through an emphasis on growth mindset to stretch their learning and persevere through challenges. School wide we focus on “Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships.” This theme guides our vision and the effects are noticeable in every classroom.

Students at UES are important and staff work tirelessly to ensure that all social, emotional, and academic needs are met. Practicing social skills or discussing personal needs in small groups with our counselor affords students opportunities to make friends. “Lunch bunches” with our counselor, our administration, and our teachers allow students to be a part of a safe atmosphere of sharing. Our “buddy classes,” where upper grade students are paired with primary students, show students that all interactions are relevant and affords our older students opportunities to be outstanding role models. Whether reading together, completing projects, or just seeing each other in the hallways, this partnership creates an atmosphere of belonging for each student. During after school clubs like Math Club, History Club, or Geography Club, classroom teachers devote additional time to build academic and social relationships with students.

All staff members at UES teach and model respect through Character Counts Pillars. We clearly define the relevance of good character and all students, Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade, can tell you what good character looks like in the classroom, in the cafeteria, on the bus, and on the playground. Students are recognized throughout the year for exhibiting amazing character by earning “Star Student” stickers that are worn home or “Soaring with Pride” stickers for the classroom. “Soaring with Pride” has become the responsibility of everyone in our building. Positive office referrals and a Random Acts of Kindness Club (H.A.W.K. Kids) support good character school wide. Our staff supports one another with Random Acts of Kindness through special surprises such as mugs filled with treats and our Making A Difference trophy presented each month to a staff member identified by the previous month’s winner as a person making a difference here at UES. Teachers are supported through collaborative planning times and additional release times to observe and learn from one another.

Our students are met with rigor in every classroom and are challenged in every subject. Real world application and interactive learning experiences encourage students to explore personal areas of interest. All students strive to meet their teachers’ high standards. Students set personal learning goals based on content area success criteria and along with teachers monitor their own learning. This encourages and supports students in taking ownership of their learning.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Engaging families and communities is a strength at UES. We encourage parents to partner with staff to ensure success for all. Relationships are one of our primary focus areas. We work closely with our PTA. Many staff are members of our PTA and attend monthly PTA meetings. We participate in activities that bring families together as a school community. Prior to the start of school, we co-host an Open House. The PTA also co-hosted with us a Boo Hoo-Yahoo Breakfast for our kindergarten parents and new families. This breakfast gives new parents the opportunity to mingle with PTA officers as well as school administration. Other shared activities with PTA include Bingo Night, Movie Night, Grandparents Breakfast, a Silent Auction, and our Strawberry Festival where members of our staff serve ice cream and sit in the dunk tank.

Many parents comment about the warm climate and welcome at our school. Our yearly perceptual survey data supports this as 89% of the 206 families responding rated our climate as favorable. Our staff focuses on building relationships. We have daytime and evening events and volunteer opportunities to support parents’ schedules. Kindergarten Orientation, Back to School Night, Volunteer Breakfast, Multicultural Night, and Career Day are a few. We partner with the local high school by having high school interns. High school football players come into the classrooms to read and work with students.

We have open lines of communication in multiple ways. School wide we use a nightly assignment agenda that informs and is a place to jot a quick note to a teacher. Many teachers use Remind, an application that allows teachers to send text messages to parents. Others use Twitter to tweet their students' accomplishments and daily activities. Some teachers have blogs that they share pictures and text to let the parents "see" into the classroom. We have a weekly "Thursday Announcement" sent by our principal that goes out via our county's Find Out First email system. We have 1,379 subscribers to our Find Out First Distribution list. These announcements keep the community abreast of the goings on in our school and provide contact information.

We are always looking to better our community. Whether we are participating in an annual basketball game with our neighboring elementary school where "Helping Hoops" is our theme and collecting food for our local food bank is the real game, or collecting socks through a student driven Sock Drive, or inviting parents to help fill our Blessings in a Backpack weekly, or our annual hat and mitten drive, or our very successful annual Jump Rope for Heart event, we are always looking for ways to involve our community while making it a better place to be.

Urbana Elementary works hard to be an inclusive school community creating partnerships with families to ensure student success.

3. Professional Development:

Our professional development (PD) is aligned to our Continuous Strategic Improvement (CSI) Plan, FCPS goals, and data analysis. Our PD is planned at the onset of the year but revised based on student and staff needs. Our CSI plan priority area is Student Achievement - Teaching and Learning. Weekly, we have a 40 minute scheduled PD time by grade level. Our school's Professional Development Google Calendar informs staff of topics to be discussed/reviewed/learned and who will lead the PD. Grade level teachers, school based specialists in math and literacy, and administrators suggest topics and then decide on who is best to present. Sometimes it is from within our staff and sometimes from central office.

Topics cover assessment and data analysis, technology sites, curricular updates, and instructional strategies. One PD covered the use of rubrics when scoring the Benchmarks Assessment System. This PD helped teachers to be consistent within grade levels when scoring our students' comprehension. At another PD, teams analyzed Math Benchmark data. This data helped determine which standards needed further work and specifically which students didn't meet mastery. Based on these scores, teams collaborated and made plans for future instruction. Early in the year, we delved into our Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) data to identify student groups which performed well and which student groups we needed to focus on. PARCC content areas were also analyzed for strengths and areas of need.

Through "kid talks" we plan future PDs to address targeted needs. After the first "kid talk" in the fall, data indicated that Math Discourse should be a focus to create more successful problem solvers. Then, our math specialist delivered a PD on the strategy of using Discourse Question Stems. Each teacher left the PD with a ring of question stems that were used to help students become more comfortable talking about math, analyzing their own work, and successfully solving problems.

Use of Success Criteria and Learning Goals within instruction is a focus this year. Teams had release time to work on this together. Unpacking Math standards using a new resource The Common Core Mathematics Companion: The Standards Decoded by Linda M. Gojak and Ruth Harbin Miles, supported this too.

Our staff, including instructional assistants, attend county level professional development on the topics of the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching Model, Junior Great Books, Digital Resources for Science, supporting students with autism in the general education classroom, and more! Our teachers present at County level professional development events to share their expertise. Our staff works collaboratively through Professional Development to better ourselves and support student achievement.

4. School Leadership:

The Leadership/Continuous School Improvement (CSI) team at Urbana Elementary consists of the principal, the assistant principal, school counselor, special education team leader, and a team-leader from each grade level and specialist area. The relationships between the members of this team are paramount to a great school environment. As a core team, we analyze school-wide data and identify trends and areas of need as well as celebrate successes. This information is then shared at Professional Development meetings with grade level teams to plan rigorous and strategic interventions to enhance and support student learning and achievement. Team leaders meet weekly with their teams to share instructional practices and brainstorm ideas to reach all students and move them forward. Rigor, relevance, and relationships is a shared leadership focus.

School administration, principal and assistant principal, practice shared leadership and decision making. Staff members are continually asked for input and invited to share ideas and feedback regarding instruction, school initiatives, and daily procedures. An open door policy is standard at UES where all can share input. Staff members are encouraged to collaborate within teams to grow professionally using leadership skills modeled by others. Our teachers share their knowledge and strategies with other teachers in our building, with teachers in other schools in Frederick County, and with local high school and college interns. Staff members have the opportunity to lead after school workshops on an area of their expertise that is identified as a need or request from other teachers. UES is also a Professional Learning Partnership School with Hood College. College students early in their education career observe and work with our teachers. The administration supports teachers sharing their expertise and shared leadership involving staff members in decisions impacting our school.

As leaders in our school, we look to our students to also practice leadership opportunities. Classroom “jobs,” kindergarten helpers, TV news crew, media center helpers, cafeteria helpers, and peer mentors show our students the relevance of becoming leaders and contributing members to society. UES’ use of Growth Mindset reinforces that being a leader is obtainable. Students are reminded daily that teamwork and perseverance will always win.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The most beneficial strategy for student success at UES is collaboration. Through collaborative processes, leadership and school based decisions are shared at UES. We pride ourselves on excellent relationships between students, staff, parents, and the community.

Collaboration among staff is an essential practice that is closing the achievement gap. Teachers plan and collaborate on all academic standards. Teachers collaborate with math and literacy specialists, special educators, administrators, teachers of other grades, English Language teachers, school psychologists, and intervention teachers. Data driven discussions about students determine best practices for student success. We have ongoing conversations about the needs of our students based on data, teacher observations, formal and informal assessments, and student progress. Teachers utilize data talks and discussion among colleagues to determine alternative ways to meet the needs of students who are not meeting standards as well as provide additional rigor for others.

Teachers emphasize strong student to student relationships in support of collaboration. In classrooms, you see peer to peer collaboration, cooperative grouping, and problem-based learning. Student-led discussions and questioning are important elements to encourage students to take ownership of their own learning. Peer editing, literacy circles, partner work, and the use of technology are ways that students collaborate. Student to teacher collaboration is also an important daily practice. Students help develop success criteria to determine if they are meeting the expectations of the common core curriculum and teachers conference with students regarding their progress towards these self-identified goals. Clear communication of expectations between students and teachers is critical to the mastery of those standards. Collaboration is a lifelong skill we want our students to possess.

The PTA and staff collaborate so all families feel a part of the Urbana community. The PTA works closely with teachers to organize enrichment opportunities such as after school clubs, artist in residency, and funding of educational programs. Additionally, the PTA along with Urbana staff, families, and community organize fundraising opportunities such as a silent auction, a fun run, movie nights, and bingo nights. These projects often support community charities and foundations. This close collaborative relationship with the community allows teachers to get to know families and their diverse backgrounds in order to teach in a culturally responsive and proficient manner.

Staff members are involved with interviews for perspective team members. We look for new staff members to share our collaborative vision as well as bring new strengths to our teams. The UES community is proud to have been named a Maryland Blue Ribbon School and we are proud of our application to be a National Blue Ribbon School.