

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Lisa Bernier

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

Official School Name Dr. Levesque Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 443 US Rte 1 P.O. Box 489

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

Frenchville                                      ME                                      04745-0489  
City    State    Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Aroostook County

Telephone (207) 543-7302

Fax

Web site/URL <http://msad33.org/>

E-mail lbernier@msad33.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\*Mrs. Lisa Bernier

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)    E-mail lbernier@msad33.org

District Name RSU 33/MSAD 33                                      Tel. (207) 543-7334

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs Rose MeQuarrie

(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**

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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

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

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 0 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 2 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
<b>PreK</b>	7	7	14
<b>K</b>	5	7	12
<b>1</b>	15	6	21
<b>2</b>	7	3	10
<b>3</b>	8	11	19
<b>4</b>	9	10	19
<b>5</b>	12	7	19
<b>6</b>	8	6	14
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	71	57	128

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 4 % Black or African American
  - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 96 % 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: 6%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	7
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	126
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 35 %  
45 Total number ELL

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

French

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 50 %  
Total number students who qualify: 64

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %  
16 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>2</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>0</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: 13
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	7
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	4
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 18:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	94%	94%	95%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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. 1999

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

Create an environment promoting excitement and a desire for learning; Aspire to reach for the best we can be intellectually, artistically, physically, and socially; Respect and value ourselves, our heritage, and the diversity of the members of our learning community; Encourage each other to use our knowledge in a positive way for the common good of the community.

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**

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Dr. Levesque Elementary School is located in the small rural community of Frenchville, Maine. It is the only elementary school for Maine School Administrative District #33 and it serves the towns of Frenchville and St. Agatha. The school is a pre-kindergarten to grade six elementary school with an enrollment of 128 students. The communities are bilingual with most people speaking both French and English. There is a strong Acadian Culture present with time spent during the school day teaching the French language and our Acadian ancestry.

The district's vision guides the daily decision making process. Teachers and the principal strive to promote a quality educational environment that ensures all students the opportunity to acquire the skills and attitudes they will need to become successful lifelong learners. In 1999 this vision helped the school earn the Blue Ribbon Award. Once receiving this award we noticed an increase with families moving to our community so their children could attend our school, local businesses were not as apprehensive to donate or support us, and parents became more involved in their child's education. We noticed an increase in Parent-Teacher Conference participation of 95% or higher which we continue to maintain. We are a strong, high achieving Title I School that has proven that one doesn't need a lot of money to be academically successful.

About seven years ago our math scores were below state expectations and our reading scores were stagnant. We tried several interventions without success. Things started to change when we empowered kids to be part of our data team, implemented Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset, and instituted one-on-one, student led growth/goal-setting meetings with teachers.

Data and grit moved our small school from being a "C" school to becoming an "A" school. "Fair isn't everybody getting the same thing...fair is everybody getting what they need in order to be successful." This saying is posted in many prominent locations in the school. This is a fitting motto for students as they sit down with teachers to discuss the Standardize Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR Reading) and the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Math (STAR Math) reports after monthly assessments. It fits equally well when students bustle off to skill-based "seminars" four times a week to work on skills that the STAR assessments indicate are needed.

Supervised study halls are offered to students in grades one through six for after school support every Tuesday and Thursday with a late bus provided. Teachers refer students for study hall based on STAR results, or students can refer themselves voluntarily. School assemblies are where we celebrate each class's monthly average growth. Every class is performing above level in reading and math. When we moved from being a C school to an A school the bottom 25% of our student population grew the most on state assessments to bump us up. We embrace Dweck's mindset of "we can't do it 'YET' but we will get there eventually." We also praise wisely; when it comes to encouraging growth, we praise effort and good choices instead of talent. We embrace mistakes and accept the fact that mistakes are inherent, even required. Students know this and see mistakes as learning opportunities rather than failures. We work on teaching our students to never give up and to never compare themselves to others; to be persistent.

Teachers and the school have put much effort in teaching to the Common Core and moving the district towards proficiency-based education and reporting. We strive to provide children with a learning environment that promotes an excitement and desire for learning. We are one of the very few districts in the St. John Valley that continues to offer pre-kindergarten through grade twelve art, music, and physical education. When appropriate, these "specials" are integrated in the regular academic curriculum in interdisciplinary units of instruction. The school offers band, chorus, robotics, after school sports, and programming through the local recreation departments.

We have single graded classrooms in grades kindergarten through six with a part-time pre-kindergarten program (11 hours a week). We have a part-time guidance counselor, social worker, computer consultant, and librarian. The special education program is inclusive a good part of the day with paraprofessionals joining students in the regular classroom to ensure success. Two educational technicians are hired with federal Title I funds to provide additional help to students in language arts and math during regular class

time and tutoring before and after school.

Besides a strong and dedicated staff, the school can attribute a lot of its success to parents. Parent involvement and support for the school are excellent. This is evidenced at parent-teacher conferences, open house, band and choral concerts, the Annual Science Fair, at Parent Teacher Committee fundraisers, and parent attendance at other school-based activities.

The Dr. Levesque School staff is fully committed to providing the best programming for students. They work to kindle in children a sense of their own potential and self-worth and to foster high aspirations. They appreciate each child's uniqueness and try to provide each with enjoyable learning experiences empowered by each child knowing what he or she needs for their learning journey. In working with the communities, they aim to prepare students to meet the complex challenges of tomorrow's world demands.



## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

The Maine State Learning Results and the Common Core are the driving forces in our teaching and core curriculum. Seven years ago we embarked on a journey to improve state achievement test math scores. Although our students were making Adequate Yearly Progress in reading and doing well on the science state test, they were falling further behind in math. Our early attempts to improve scores involved purchasing a new math series and increasing daily math instruction to one hour per day. Yet, even with these interventions our report card grade from the state department was a “C.”

We picked ourselves up and decided to approach student learning in a totally different way. Our core curriculum became fluid where students could move at their own pace and we provided the gift of time. On the first day of school we addressed the student population by announcing the school year would be the year to celebrate academic growth. Students were told that they were an integral part of the team and we, the staff, were present to help them set goals and to accomplish them. We changed our universal screening tools to STAR Math and STAR Reading tools from Renaissance Learning. These tools allowed us to print growth records and instructional planning reports that drive instruction and small group tutoring. We incorporated a forty-five minute skills seminar in our schedule Monday through Thursday for reading, math and science. Teachers teach to their strengths for two-week intervals in math, reading, and science. Students set goals for each subject and are urged to take control of their learning by meeting with their teachers and to ask for help.

The staff meets twice a month to discuss and analyze student data and to set up flexible groups for needed skills. Students and staff meet once a month to discuss and celebrate student growth and to track progress as a school. All schedules align by subject in grades K-6 to enable teachers to accelerate students by subject area. We offer pullout gifted and talented work sessions on a weekly basis in science, math, language arts, and social studies.

In every core area we unpack Common Core standards to create learning targets that are attainable and understood by all students. Students use a 1 to 4 rubric to demonstrate proficiency on each target until mastery. Students can choose different pathways to show proficiency.

With this mindset our scores on the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) have soared. For the 2016-2017 school year our reading scores were 73.02% of our students in grades 3 thru 6 at a level 3 or 4 (up from 66.18% in 2015-2016) and our math scores were 64.62% of students in grades 3 thru 6 being at a level 3 or 4 (up from 44.14% in 2015-2016).

For social studies we use grade level expectations and civic learning engagement for a well-rounded experience. Students are taught the rights and responsibilities of civic life and the types and purposes of governments. Students gain historical knowledge of major events, people, and enduring themes in the United States, in Maine, and throughout world history. Grades 5 & 6 take a 3-day class trip to Boston, MA every two years. Students acquire foundational skills through hands-on, experiential approaches.

In science, we follow the Maine State Learning Results to guide instruction. We have not moved towards the NGSS standards because the MEA Science test is based on the Learning Results and for the last 3 years our scores have been: 84%, 90% and 100% proficient in science in grade 5.

Our school also participates in Project Lead the Way, which is a problem based Science curriculum, which is paid for by our local paper mill.

For our Pre-K program we currently use a wide variety of resources in order to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our children and aligning ourselves with standards that are age appropriate and that will build onto the Kindergarten standards. We follow the Maine Early Childhood Standards, which are aligned with our OWL curriculum. Our curriculum covers early language and literacy, health and physical activity,

mathematics, social studies, and science. We also use Everyday Math as our math program, which is from grades Pre-K to 6th grade. In each unit of the OWL curriculum there is a map that outlines the Maine Early Childhood Standards that are being met and how those standards are being met with centers that involve play, writing, technology use, art, etc. We currently use Handwriting Without Tears to teach children letter formation using simplified explanations of the letters by discussing and examining how letters have curves and lines and how those make up each and every letter.

Many of the Maine Early Childhood Standards align with the Common Core Standards that are used in Grades K – 3.

Children who have had experience with Headstart or other early learning education opportunities have proven to be more adaptable and ready for the routine of school. They tend to be more flexible and used to following directions and routines. They seem to understand their responsibility as a student, whereas a student who has no experience prior to entering the program needs a little more guidance in the routines that may seem unfamiliar to them. Past experiences with “school” type programs have proven to be helpful in preparing children for the school atmosphere.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

The district has a comprehensive K - 12 arts program that consists of both music and visual arts. The goal of the arts program is to give students the opportunities to develop technical skills as well as a background in history, aesthetics, and critique while developing their ability to express their unique vision of the world around them. Our two teachers deliver curriculum by meeting with students twice weekly for music lessons and once weekly for art instruction.

Students are taught to create and perform to express ideas and feelings. In art, they learn fundamental concepts so they can use a variety of media to draw or paint. In music, they learn the elements of music (melody, rhythm, harmony, form, and style) so they can interpret and produce music. Students learn the vocabulary for music and art, their elements, principles, and structures that allow for the communication of ideas, feelings, and moods. Band, chorus, and art shows are held twice a year to showcase learning.

Physical Education and intramural sports are essential parts of the curriculum at Dr. Levesque School. These areas provide opportunities for students to excel and develop positive self-esteem. In physical education classes students acquire the knowledge needed to be physically fit. By playing sports in regular physical education classes and in the after school program students learn team-building and good sportsmanship. The physical education teacher has hosted the Jump Rope for Heart program for 5 years. Our little school raises over \$3000.00 each year for the American Heart Association. It has been recognized for these efforts by receiving banners which are displayed proudly in our gym. Dr. Levesque School has also earned GOLD distinction at the Aroostook County, Maine level for five years in a row for its work with encouraging the 5-2-1-0 philosophy (5 servings of fruits and vegetables, 2 or less hours of screen time a day, 1 hours of physical activity a day, and 0 sugary drinks). The district has a Wellness Policy that has received accolades at the state level for being thorough and effective. It’s amazing what parents choose to send for birthday celebrations instead of cupcakes.

The subject of French is taught in grades pre-kindergarten to grade six twice a week. French Acadian heritage is also incorporated into this curriculum and culminates at the end of the year in a celebration entitled, “Une Soiree du Bon Vieux Temps” (An Evening of the Good Old Times). The gymnasium is packed with extended families and ends with a “poye” bar. A poye is an Acadian buckwheat pancake which can be eaten with butter, maple syrup, peanut butter, basically anything one desires to smother it with. In the K-3 levels French is incorporated in the content areas so students won’t view the learning of the language as compartmentalized.

A French immersion program rents a room at Dr. Levesque School. This program is for 4 to 5 year olds whose parents choose for them to learn the French language. It is sponsored by the St. John Valley Club Francais. This is another way the community ensures the French language and culture will survive. Even though we are not a wealthy district, priority has been placed on one-to-one computing in all grades 1

through 6. Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten share iPads and use them in small groups or at learning stations. We contract out an IT person one day a week. The district invests in online programs such as Renaissance Learning's STAR Math and Reading assessments, Accelerated Reader, Learning Farm, MobyMax, Khan Academy, and several others to ensure academic success. We have a full-time district librarian who guides a library technician at Dr. Levesque School. We host Book Fairs once a year, which is supported by parents. Although a local budget is built for the library the Book Fair brings in monies that allows students to have a special request suggestion box for purchases.

We have a strong Gifted and Talented Program, which has only been in place for five years. Six of the teachers at Dr. Levesque School have earned the gifted and talented endorsement from the state of Maine. Two years ago we organized our school wide schedule so language arts and math were offered at the same time kindergarten through grade six. This allows us the pathway of accelerating students by subject area or even by grade level. Once students reach sixth grade we have an extended math course for advanced students. This programming allows these students to go straight to Algebra I as seventh graders in the middle school. Our special education program is unique in that for part of the day students are mainstreamed with the help of educational technicians. Least restrictive environment is our number one priority. Several years ago when we earned an "A" grade for our growth on state achievement tests, the bottom 25% of our student population was hugely responsible for this growth. Our Title I program provides 2.2 educational technicians for in-class support, tutoring halls before school, at recess time, and after school. It also provides an after school study hall where students either self-refer, are referred by their teacher or parent, and are monitored for one and a half hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A late bus and snack is provided each session.

### **3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

Teachers use a variety of practices in the classroom to reach student needs. Students are engaged in several flexible-grouping opportunities throughout the day. Our teachers incorporate centers for ELA, math, science, social studies, etc. and within these centers students practice skills at their individual levels. Our school also participates in Project Lead the Way, which is a problem based Science curriculum. As early as Kindergarten, students are exposed to technology based programs through the use of iPads, computers and laptops, smart boards, and Apple TV. Students use programs such as, Learning Farm, MobyMax, Learning A to Z, Khan Academy as technology centers throughout their years at Dr. Levesque School. Using STAR data, teachers analyze the needs of students and create seminars. These seminars are offered at the end of each day for 45 minutes for students to practice skills that they are below proficiency on. STAR data also helps identify students that are ready for accelerated instruction. We also offer a Gifted and Talented Program for students K through 12. Students are identified at the beginning of Third Grade, however there is a GT endorsed teacher in First Grade who guides K-2 teachers to challenge those students in their classrooms. At the beginning of each year teachers distribute learning style inventories to students in which they indicate their learning preferences. From there teachers try to provide students with activities that meet their learning styles. In addition, teachers incorporate the multiple intelligences into their instruction. This way students are exposed to various learning styles and can demonstrate what they've learned through the use of multiple intelligences. Therefore, whether students be linguistic, visual, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, and etc. they can be successful in their learning.

Teachers also differentiate within their classrooms using flexible and tiered grouping. Our Language Arts curriculum includes leveled readers and tiered instruction linked to the leveled readers. Pre-assessments are used to determine which groups students are placed in. Throughout the day students also participate in flexible grouping where they can learn from one another. Other interventions used Dr. Levesque Elementary School include tutoring hall which take place before the start of the school day, during lunches, and after school. Students, teachers, and parents work collaboratively to determine which times work best for each student. Our school also offers an after school study hall program twice a week in which students can self refer, or teachers and parents can refer. These study hall times allow for students to practice skills, work on homework, or do more independent studying. After trying several interventions, if students are still below proficiency in certain academic areas, the school will hold a staffing meeting which includes parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators to discuss and develop a plan to serve student needs.

A variety of assessments are used at Dr. Levesque Elementary School. These include, but are not limited to, DIAL Screening, STAR, DIBELS, Classroom Assessments, and State Achievement Tests. DIAL Screening indicates whether a student needs further assessment for speech, language, or motor development. All classroom teachers on a monthly basis use Star Testing. Once students complete the test, teachers meet individually with them to review their scores and set goals for the next test. Teachers use classroom assessments to group and tier instruction for students. Once scores from state achievement tests are released to the school, teachers review and analyze how students answered questions and from there create learning opportunities targeting weak areas. The goal is the more students practice these skills the better the chance they will achieve higher scores on future tests.

The special education population is the only subgroup that has at least a 10 point achievement gap on state achievement tests as compared to the total school population. We are addressing this group with the same techniques as the rest of the student population: after school study halls, tutoring, growth meetings and goal setting. The gap is much smaller today due to our "growth mindset" and "never give up" philosophy and attitude. The special education and the economically disadvantaged subgroups are the students who helped boost our grade from a "C" to an "A" in 2014 due to showing the most growth as a collective group! All of the above strategies are helping learners achieve high levels of success. Our goal is to continue using these strategies and having students be accountable for their learning. We hope to continue on this path of success through hard work, accountability, and motivation.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Student accountability for their own learning as it relates to data gathered through STAR and other classroom assessments has been the number one factor in motivating students. Once we told students in 2014 that we, the staff, could not move our school's achievement test scores higher without their help, things progressed in a positive way. We met as a school and shared that we were putting study aids in place and it was up to students to take control of their learning by choosing to participate. STAR Math and Reading assessments provided the data in growth, student diagnostics, and instructional planning reports. Each student was provided a growth folder and a private teacher meeting each month to look at scores and set goals.

We initiated a positive behavior “star” collection program where students not only earn stars for doing well on STAR assessments but for being caught doing random acts of kindness and good learning choices. Once students earn 1000 stars collectively as a school, a full school day is used for wellness activities. Students are surveyed for choices of activities. Extra recesses are also a great motivator. These are surprise extra recess time for just being great kids and hard workers. It is also really awesome that students will randomly stop adults in the hallways and state, “Do you know how many months I grew in STAR Math this month?” We also have a big display in our school multi-purpose room called the Random Acts of Kindness Heart Wall. Students can earn small colored hearts for being caught being a good citizen and friend. The smaller hearts are placed in the larger heart on display in the multi-purpose room and it is eventually filled with good deeds. Teachers feel valued and supported because they are part of our team. They have voice and choice in every part of our school. Teachers are trusted to be professionals and to make educational decisions for their students. They do not hesitate to ask for guidance from the principal and at times have agreed to disagree. Teachers do not hesitate to ask for help in different ways, they know they will get the support.

The principal needs to be out often this year due to being hired as part-time superintendent. It is amazing how the staff comes together to carry the weight of different issues that arise when she is out. It is an atmosphere of trust. We have been a state recognized Gold Level School for the past five years for our work with promoting physical activity and nutrition. We have a board approved wellness policy that has been shared statewide due to its effectiveness. We never use food as a reward and all rewards are connected to physical activity. Parents support us by sending nutritious snacks and creative birthday celebration foods instead of cupcakes and fruit juice. We offer water at lunch as a choice and have applied for grants to get new water fountains and water bottle filling stations in our school.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

The Parents provide awesome activities and prizes to show appreciation and to say thank you to teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week. We have a very active District Leadership Team with four parent representatives. The team meets once a month to move the district forward with Proficiency-Based Education. We host an annual Science Fair where 80% of our students present to parents and community. The middle/high school sends students who act as discussants for elementary school students to ensure all projects are visited. The local paper mill became partners with our LEGO Robotics team by providing an engineer to help shape and develop our team project for the competition.

We have several students who have created and executed service learning projects that have been recognized locally and at the state level. One student raised money to purchase an iPad for the Barbara Bush Children's Oncology ward and the second raised money for our local cat shelter. We have an open door policy where parents know they can come visit at any time. Teachers never hesitate to contact parents via phone calls or email. Several teachers have the application Class DOJO where parents can check in any time during the day to see how their child is doing in earning or losing behavior points. We have annual college essay contests sponsor by Maine College Circle where parents proudly attend to see their

child/children accept a scholarship for writing an outstanding college aspiration essay. Parents attend art shows, band and chorus concerts, and any other events can pack the multi-purpose room to its capacity.

### **3. Professional Development:**

The number one priority for professional development is to bring the training to the district. For example, we have read several books and held K-12 Professional Learning Community workshops either at after school staff meetings or early dismissal days. Three such examples of books studies are: *Mindset*, by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D; *Habits of Mind* by Costa and Kallick; and *No Such Thing As A Bad Kid*, by Charles D. Appelstein, MSW. Mr. Appelstein has provided two full day workshops to the K-12 staff to share strategies to help teachers deal with troubled students. Teachers are allowed to go out for professional development and come back to the district to share what they have learned with their colleagues.

We have also joined forces with two other school districts to share expenses to get the most bang for our buck and more dynamic speakers. A Tri-District group of 24 educators traveled to the ASCD conference in Boston, MA the weekend of March 23 to 26. The most recent local work was a full day workshop with Knowledge Works, a company that is helping us move towards proficiency-based/personal learning education. This is geared mostly towards helping teachers provided different pathways for students to achieve proficiency and to be successful. This aligns perfectly with our growth mindset, trusting students to choose a pathway to academic success. The philosophy that there is more than one way to reach a goal, to show what you have learned, and to ask for guidance when knowing what skills students need.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The principal ensures that in-house workshops are what teachers need to move forward and to be supported. For example, since teachers were having problems navigating a new student reporting system she ensured every teacher Pre-K through 12 had sit down time with the district curriculum coordinator by releasing them from classrooms. Substitutes were called in to cover classes. She encourages teacher leadership which has led to initiatives such as: The gifted and talented robotics program, teacher led proficiency-based grade cluster personal learning projects where three teachers will pilot the program during the 2018-2019 school year.

The art teacher has been supported in her endeavor with a school-wide art integration program. She also serves the role of Assistant Principal. The grade six teacher serves at the Teacher Licensure Committee Chairperson. Several teachers have taken on leadership roles on the District Leadership Team. One teacher has been instrumental in moving the school toward proficiency-based education and all it entails. The third grade teacher leads the Project Lead the Way Team. he went for the training and then came back to the district to train all other staff members. All in all, when a leader is needed...a teacher takes the lead and progress is made.

The principal's philosophy is: "If I ask an employee to do a job...I better be willing to do the task too." For example, she has been seen on the roof on weekends shoveling snow, she takes duties for teachers, she'll do janitorial jobs when the custodian is out on a bus run, and even spent time cleaning a bus garage to ensure the district would qualify for an award by the Maine State Department. We are not an affluent district but teachers are resourceful in seeking grants and funding sources such as from DonorsChoose.org.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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If we were to choose ONE practice it would have to be adopting Dweck's growth mindset which led to the involvement of student learners on our data teams. It is all about how to and empower students to celebrate mistakes and praising kids for their efforts and choices instead of intellect. We don't tell kids they are smart, because if they bomb a test, they believe they are not smart anymore.

This is connected to our academic success with state achievement test growth and the use of Renaissance Learning's STAR assessments. Having student one-on-one data meetings with teachers, looking at reports and setting goals, and having a never give up attitude has moved us forward. The school-wide data meetings where we look at group results by grade and rewarding students with extra recesses has added to the success story. Students actually get excited about taking STAR tests and look forward to sharing their growth.