

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):
- 11 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 17 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	35	28	63
1	34	36	70
2	40	35	75
3	49	27	76
4	41	37	78
5	45	38	83
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	244	201	445

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 14 % Black or African American
 - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 63 % White
 - 9 % 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: 4%

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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	16
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	445
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7%
32 Total number ELL

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

Amharu, Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Filipino, French, Hmong, Mandigo, Oromo, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tigrinya

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 33%
 Total number students who qualify: 145

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
46 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>9</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>2</u> Deafness | <u>2</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>4</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>6</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</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: 3
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.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 25:1

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.

To provide a stimulating and engaging atmosphere that fosters all students' innate curiosity and joy of discovery to achieve high levels of success.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Students are accepted into Kindergarten at the School of Engineering and Arts through an admission process governed by school board policy - 599AP Kindergarten Admission to the School of Engineering and Arts (SEA). Admission shall be determined by lottery if the number of applicants exceeds the number of openings. Seats are reserved in the lottery for students within specific geographic and demographic characteristics of the entire school district. Admission into other grade levels are facilitated through Enrollment Options and is dependent on space availability.

PART III – SUMMARY

At the School of Engineering and Arts (SEA), we are rooted in the STEAM (science-technology-engineering-arts-math) philosophy providing our students with a stimulating and engaging atmosphere that fosters students' innate curiosity and joy of discovery to achieve high levels of success. We operate with two constant queries in mind, "What if?" and "How are we different?" When we opened our doors six years ago, we set out to create a community that broke the traditional educational paradigm, yet had to fit within the established boundaries for a public elementary school. Today, we can proudly say these queries have helped to establish a school full of risk takers, problem solvers, and critical thinkers. We strive daily to engage one another in the typical teacher to student and inversely student to teacher connection, but also uniquely the student to student, teacher to teacher, and school to community connections.

Our school traditions, not just the curriculum, are built on the foundation of inquiry and hands-on learning. We pride ourselves on creating an environment of independent, yet collaborative, innovators and thinkers. Our students develop in all areas of their lives. We foster our student's natural curiosity and celebrate wonders in our student-driven classrooms, where student voice is more prevalent than the one teacher voice. We do not work, learn or teach subjects within silos, hence, our daily goal is intentional instructional integration utilizing the state standards as our guide in every aspect of learning. Within all of this, we embed Dweck's work on growth mindsets acknowledging the power of 'yet', that failing is a part of the learning process, and perseverance within every task regardless the complexity. Therefore, our students learn at an early age the importance of observation utilizing all senses and how to craft questions that answer a deeper 'why'.

Differentiation occurs in everything we do. Whether is in student instruction, staff professional development, classrooms for flexible seating options, or showcasing student mastery differentiation is embedded throughout a student's day. Student choice is important and frequently solicited in order for success to happen socially, emotionally, and academically.

As a magnet school, SEA's student body is comprised of students throughout our entire seven-city school district. In addition, approximately 11% of our student body comes from neighboring school districts. The application for entrance in to SEA does not have qualifiers, instead it is a simple application complete with school transfer forms. For incoming kindergarten students, all applications are entered into a district operated lottery where positions at SEA are filled at random. The one caveat is sibling preference where entering kindergarten students are automatically admitted to SEA should they have siblings within the first through fifth grades. For students wanting to transfer into SEA and entering first through fifth grade, they are admitted in a first come, first served basis as spots are open within classrooms. Class size is dictated by district averages with 22 students in each kindergarten class and increasing each year until fifth grade, which caps out at 27 students in each class. Teachers' children are automatically enrolled; however, these students are additional within their classroom, meaning they do not take lottery spots.

Our building is situated in a diverse and vibrant neighborhood that has fully embraced our school in multiple ways. Many of our retired neighbors volunteer as tutors and assistants during the school day in a variety of contexts. These neighbors support our school financially with donations as well as always keeping an eye on our space, including our little library, outdoor classrooms, gardens and chickens. We actively partner with the neighborhood Pumpkin Festival in staffing the pumpkin education table with our student Junior Naturalists, participating in the parade, growing large pumpkins and tall sunflowers, and helping to decorate the neighborhood for the Saturday event.

In addition to our neighbors as volunteers, we also partner with one of our high schools where students volunteer on a bi-monthly occurrence to teach scientific concepts in hands-on, real life applicable ways. Moreover, numerous members of local companies and organizations visit SEA as partners in education. These visitors contribute knowledge and experience in terms of careers, content, and context to real life all within the frame of whatever the students are currently learning. At times, our students experience full immersion learning when they are taken into the field and guided by content experts. Simultaneously, we intentionally seek out professionals who mirror our students' diversity allowing our kids to see and interact

with adults who look like them resulting in an even more powerful and empowering experience. Each interaction is unique and powerful for our students, as they showcase contributing members of society making a positive impact within their field, all the while showcasing what students are learning foundationally within a real world context.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The School of Engineering and Arts (SEA) addresses a STEAM-focused curriculum through integration. We work collaboratively to define a scope and sequence where standards are addressed and achieved, project based learning occurs, student engagement is strong, and rigorous learning occurs daily. Staff seek support from one another for teaching strategies and resources in both enrichment and remediation. Regardless of the subject, the curricular formula used focuses on students creating observations from which wonders are formed and in turn questions are derived. It is from student driven questions, combined with standards, that learning targets are composed. Students learn best when engaged and their voice is heard. We ensure this happens by utilizing Webb’s Depth of Knowledge questioning strategies working to fluidly transition between the four questioning levels to guarantee rigor. We employ Hess’ Cognitive Rigor Matrices to provide ample options of differentiation thereby providing students engagement at their level. We promote Boaler’s tenets in that mistakes are a valuable part of the learning process. We advocate Hollie’s Academic Vocabulary so as not to assume each student comes from the same background of experiences.

Literacy is woven throughout all content. While multiple strategies are utilized in literacy instruction, the most frequently used when instructing new information is whole group instruction complete with mini-lessons which transition into flexible group work or independent practice. Having the teacher employ direct instruction, which always leads to structured or directed inquiry, allows for a balance of teacher and student voice. Students are fully engaged as they practice, clarify, and think critically while the teacher guides. Additional strategies used to empower our learners include reader’s theater where students perform a story allowing for creativity to shine, use of manipulatives for word work providing learning supports for differentiation, cross grade buddy classroom lessons where primary and intermediate teachers co-teach and different aged learners work collaboratively side by side, and guided reading providing more individualized instruction which in turn empowers students to become proficient in fluency, comprehension, and use of reading strategies.

Much like literacy, math instruction occurs through the utilization of multiple strategies. Math is delivered on a spectrum of direct instruction, building foundational knowledge, to open inquiry, practicing authentic application of concepts, and focusing on the sequence of understanding from concrete to representational to abstract. This includes math talk, where students verbally process solutions allowing for deeper reasoning to occur as well as for the teacher to gain understanding or misunderstanding; guided math with small groups to aide in mathematical rationale and language development; and the practice of applying concepts within a variety of settings for authentic learning experiences. The phrase ‘real world’ occurs 27 times within our state K-5 math standards. If we were not providing authentic application, such as in our 3rd grade economic unit where students determine pricing, conduct sales, manage a checkbook and more, we would not be adequately meeting these standards. Our students realize math is the language spoken in science, technology, engineering or arts investigations.

Science supports our students’ natural sense of wonder with interactive, real life application. Through this methodology, students are engaged as evidenced in the quality of questions posed. Much of our investigations happens within the world around us. Our students are frequently found outdoors learning in our prairie, butterfly garden, greenhouse, vegetable gardens, or small forest officially known as the SEA-cret Forest per our partnership with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resource (DNR). Additionally, students help to raise, make observations, and collect data from animals including chickens, tortoises, reptiles, a tarantula, and many fish including 300 rainbow trout per funding from the DNR. Students participate in real science. Fourth graders volunteer with Hennepin County’s RiverWatch program collecting and reporting data from an adopted Creek twice annually. Kindergarten students plant tulips each fall and make observations each spring reporting data to a citizen science website. In 5th grade, science culminates with a Science Showcase, different from a Fair with the removal of competition, students showcase knowledge gained from an independent inquiry-focused science investigation.

With Social Studies, we engage learners through deliberate instruction via application of concepts. Democracy is understood through the development of classroom and school-wide rules as well as student participation in organized clubs such as student council and junior naturalists where students learn to be a representative of their class respecting all opinions. Voting is practiced during elections for student council and school-wide choices, such as the creation of our playground. Geography is learned through analysis of regions, such as with the 4th grade where students do region showcases or in 2nd grade where students write and video record weather reports from various monuments throughout the United States. Geography is also exercised through the use of GPS units to map out the school yard. Civic engagement occurs as students investigate back stories and then instigate fundraisers to create wells for water at schools in Africa or provide relief for hurricane victims, or collect pop tops for Ronald McDonald House. Civic activism occurs as students remind teachers and one another to conserve energy and to sort waste into compost, recycling or trash. Through all of this, our aim is to create children who are hope-filled, not hopeless.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Mindful of integration, other curricular areas are not stand alones, instead are embedded in daily learning. Specialist and classroom teachers frequently collaborate, ensuring a compliment of content, application, and acquisition of essential skills and knowledge occurs fluidly and are practiced in authenticity. Through this cooperative planning, each teacher is familiar on how skills build upon one another thus can challenge students at a higher level.

Art is embedded in all aspects of the students' day. Whether through the design process, observation, offering and receiving critiques, or creating, our students' work is reflective of multiple forms including digital media, drawing, architecture, sculpting, graphic design, and visual. Direct instruction for visual arts occurs twice monthly. These lessons build upon one another in a variety of mediums as to demonstrate connection. Many lessons are front-loaded to set the stage for authentic learning in the classroom. For example, the art teacher starts each year with how to create a scientific sketch complete with labels. This skill is built upon as students utilize science notebooks on a daily basis.

Music instruction occurs twice weekly. In the Sound Lab, students not only meet music standards, but also math, science and reading standards. Students apply rhythm to reading fluency and practice poetry on the beats. Drumming is connected to word parts and syllables. In 3rd grade, learning about pitch and vibration occurs through the engineering of diddley bows. Self-confidence is enhanced with grade level concerts and talent shows. Fourth and fifth graders have the option to participate in either band, orchestra or both.

Occurring twice weekly, physical education, known as Kin Lab, where the study of kinesiology occurs in an integrated fashion. Science vocabulary is utilized and practiced as traditional games are tweaked with 'new' words. For example, instead of tag, students play predator/prey. Students participate in spelling and reading games, skip counting and more all the while practicing sportsmanship, conflict resolution and social emotional skill building, and the promotion of permanent learning. Physical education is not bound by the gym, rather it flows throughout the school such as at recess where students run laps to earn mile points or with staff in 'commit to be fit' challenges. Health is advocated with the "I tried it" program at lunch showcasing foods not typical with students. Community is included with our participation in Fuel Up to Play 60, Step It Up, and an Anti Bully Run. In all of this, full inclusion of special and regular education students occur with adaptations being a part of each lesson with all students participating.

While media instruction occurs twice monthly, students also visit the media center at will for book check out or to seek assistance from the staff. Media staff integrate and support all curricular standards providing connections for students further solidifying skills and essential knowledge. Media staff co-teach with classroom teachers incorporating digital literacy and safety, research, writing and more into multiple lessons. Project based learning thrives as 5th graders write and record public service announcements, 2nd graders write and record weather reports, and 3rd graders write and record commercials. Additionally, 5th graders have the leadership opportunity to create an almost daily newscast highlighting school news, weather, and fun segments. Students are exposed to a multitude of essential skill building opportunities including writing and speaking skills, video production, use of green screen, teamwork and responsibility.

Technology is used daily as a tool and medium to consume and produce information. All students have access to multiple forms including hardware, software, and programming, used as often as possible in as many ways as possible throughout the students' day. We employ a K-5 scope and sequence for robotics enhancing visual literacy, spatial relation and computer programming skills. In addition, while all students have access to 3D pens, 5th graders learn and create with TinkerCAD to print objects with the 3D Makerbot printer.

Engineering is promoted as both design and invention. Our method of instruction engages students in cross-curricular investigations promoting creativity, thoughtful planning, critical conversations, mistakes and 'almost final' products. The Engineering Process is expanded to compliment the writing process or solve a math problem with the intention that learning is a process. Our Engineering Lab is utilized as a Maker Space where loud, messy, and collaborative learning happens. One example of engineering in practice occurs each fall, where pumpkins, tucked carefully inside engineered containers, are thrown off the roof hoping to survive the landing. This school wide event brings together our full community, parents and neighbors included, to discuss what materials worked and what did not, eventually leading to a better design the next time. Fourth grade students wrap up their school year with an Invention Convention, where students, following the Engineering Design process, create or enhance anything that serves a need to others and makes the world a better place.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

We provide an inclusive environment partnering with parents to ensure individual needs of students are met as well as instructional goals achieved. We have high expectations for each student and scaffold instruction to meet learners where they are while providing supports to where they need to be or providing opportunities for above grade level learning. We believe in the whole child and work collaboratively with all staff, including special education, gifted and talented, social worker, English language, equity specialist, psychologist, nurse and reading/math corps volunteers, to provide ample opportunities for success. We continually strive to ensure all students are achieving at high levels and connecting to the learning through differentiated instruction. This is accomplished through a strong support of developed intervention services.

We use the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework to enhance student learning. Our core instruction, Tier 1, takes a proactive approach in providing students with an opportunity to build schema through the use of best practice instructional strategies, many of which have been detailed in other sections of this application: integration of core content, experiential learning including field trips, expert presenters both online and in-person, observations and questioning, Boaler's visual mathematics and math talk, Hattie's feedback and grouping, Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrix, Webb's Depth of Knowledge, Hollie's culturally responsive teaching and learning, project based learning, and student voice and choice. We front load authentic experiences, so students at all levels enter into learning with similar foundational knowledge not predicated on their background schema. In addition, our flexible schedule allows time for push in by our English Learner and SPED staff, pull outs by our Gifted staff, and small group instruction for dedicated What I Need (WIN) time allowing for individualized instruction, student choice, and rigorous remedial or enrichment. Through the implementation of universal screeners and ongoing common formative and summative assessments, instruction is designed to meet student needs. During literacy and math instruction, mini lessons are provided from which students transition into small guided learning groups or independent work all prescribed by the teacher to meet the students' need and the confidence that comes from gradual release of responsibility.

While we work diligently to ensure all students are proficient in reading and math, and we have shown growth in proficiency over time, we unfortunately do have achievement gaps. Math proficiencies, according to the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA), for 3rd through 5th grade collectively, has steadily increased over time in proficiency from 77% in 2015 to 79% in 2017. Proficiencies in our 3rd through 5th grade students of color (SOC) have steadily increased over time from 49.4% in 2015 to 67% in 2017. The achievement gap between white and SOC has steadily decreased over time from 32.4% in 2015 to 18% in 2017. The achievement gap between white and Hispanic students has steadily decreased over time from 38.9% in 2015 to 15% in 2017. The achievement gap between white and black students has steadily decreased over time from 37.6% in 2015 to 23% in 2017. In terms of reading proficiencies, according to the

MCAs, for 3rd through 5th grade collectively, we have steadily increased over time in proficiency from 68% in 2015 to 75.4% in 2017. Proficiencies in our 3rd through 5th grade SOC have steadily increased over time from 49.4% in 2015 to 61% in 2017. The achievement gap between white and SOC has steadily decreased over time from 29% in 2015 to 19.7% in 2017. The achievement gap between white and Hispanic students has steadily decreased over time from 39.1% in 2015 to 19.7% in 2017. The achievement gap between white and black students decreased from 27.2% in 2015 to 17.9% in 2016, but increased in 2017 to 32.2%.

An additional intervention used to address these gaps, staff collaborate weekly during Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to analyze student formative and summative data. Summative data includes the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), FAST, running records, and content assessments. Based on data, students needing extra support with identified skills are assigned an intervention, which could be remedial or enrichment in Tier 2 both of which require strategic monitoring of progress, or referred to our MTSS team. This team is a multidisciplinary group that encompasses the following specialists: school psychologist, school social worker, nurse, special education teacher, administrator/district representative, teachers, parent, etc. The team reviews current data, (district testing/state testing, formal and informal measures, growth over time as compared to expected growth, report cards, outside medical records, etc.), and makes a plan targeting student's needs (academic/behavioral/social, etc.). The team recommends research-based interventions to address needs with each team member having a voice. Students in MTSS are closely monitored over six to eight weeks after which a follow-up meeting occurs to discuss progress. Student data is evaluated both by skill and general outcome measure. The Team makes a plan for moving forward with continued interventions or moving back into Tier 1 based on the intervention success.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

We pride ourselves in hearing from visitors how welcomed they feel. As they enter our environment, they are greeted by students and staff throughout the building. They witness students working collaboratively all over the place, not just in their classroom, and often without an adult nearby to ensure on-task behaviors. Guests share evidence of empathy and kindness witnessed in interactions. They express how impressed they are with the level of mutual trust and respect with students to students, student to teacher and vice versa. Through this feedback, we know we have created a family. We can empirically support this from our district's 'sense of belonging' survey administered to 4th and 5th grade students where our students indicate a 95% agreement to the statement "I feel like 'I belong' at this school".

We strive to foster fun. Every Friday morning, music plays school-wide over the PA and we dance. Student council defines school-wide dress up days, which at a STEAM school uniquely include Star Wars Day and Pi Day. Staff gather every other week for conversation and connection over breakfast. It is not uncommon to hear students express unhappiness on Friday afternoons that they will not have school again until Monday. Learning is an opportunity for excitement and fun.

We operate in a community where all voices are heard. There is not just one voice, rather student voice is valued and shared leadership is advocated. We are in the business of educating youth, hence we are student-focused and driven providing students opportunities to influence learning. An example is a student leadership group with a staff advisor that includes our unique Junior Naturalist crew where the focus is on environmental awareness as they monitor and educate on energy usage, recycling and composting, as well as care for the chickens and many gardens. An example of a student group where all learning is student-driven is the computer coding club where students collaborate on Scratch projects.

Student work and pride is celebrated with work samples, pictures, and projects posted all around. Students can often be found pausing in front of such pieces to admire and discuss. We view our students as label-less and limitless. It is not uncommon to find a student at the head of the classroom as the teacher to fill in as the guide on the side. Students volunteer at school-wide events providing tours, sharing presentations, and facilitating activities and instruction. A rotating team of students collaborate to produce the school news filled with daily announcements, staff shout-outs, celebrations and more. Every single one of these opportunities provides confidence and empowerment for our students whether they are the leader or the participant. By encouraging student voice and choice, we support the student's sense of belonging, creative thinking, and risk taking to build upon their strengths and challenge new areas of growth.

These practices are not limited to students alone. Each staff member is a part of a committee where voices are heard and challenges to the status quo are encouraged. Without this, we would become stagnant and not meet the needs of our ever-changing society and students. Staff are trusted and valued as we foster a culture that appreciates and recognizes teachers and their work. From this, a true sense of team is evident. When short staffed due to lack of substitutes, teachers take on extra students or give up prep time to cover for one another. Administration seeks input from staff to assist in decision-making. Staff meetings are set up to facilitate true discussion and amplify staff voice.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

We have very intentionally focused on community connections that align with our mission, vision, and required standards. Every stakeholder within our school community benefits when collaboration occurs. Our families and greater community are welcomed into the building at any time and are actively involved with enhancing academics and providing supports in multiple ways. It is so commonplace to have non-staff working with and supporting learners, our students know no other way of how a school should function. Bringing our greater community in enables our students to see opportunities for their future and empowers learners on the purpose in their learning and the 'why' of it all.

We have a very active social media presence where school events are advertised as community events and not exclusive to our school families. Celebrations and frequent updates are posted allowing our extended community to be knowledgeable and up-to-date. Teachers utilize frequent connections with families and community members through a myriad of ways including, emails, phone calls, written postcards, SeeSaw, and Schoology all in which to establish a strong portal of communication.

Academically, students benefit from families and our community via collaborations and partnerships. Too numerous to list individually, organizations provide speakers, materials and authentic learning experiences that enrich our units of study. Sometimes speakers are in-person such as with the Wiggle Your Toes organization where members share how technology has impacted their life as an amputee. Sometimes speakers are via video chat such as with NASA engineers who discuss how problem solving occurs with limited materials in space. Other times interactions occur individually within the classrooms such as when high schoolers visit twice monthly to teach science or when parents volunteer to work with students. Many retired neighbors commit to volunteering weekly in the classrooms. Local police teach about healthy decisions. In some cases, our students go to the organization's site to be fully immersed in learning such as the case with Pearson Candy where students worked collaboratively with Pearson and a local marketing company to re-brand a parade float.

Community support occurs beyond direct instruction. We hold an active role in our neighborhood's annual fall festival participating in the parade, providing an education table, and competing in pumpkin growing contests. In turn, the neighborhood watches out for us - helping to take care of our chickens and gardens in the summer, keeping trails in the woods cleared, and supporting us financially with donations for items such as our playground. Local churches provide backpack meals for students in need as well as built materials that enhance our outdoor classrooms.

Our active volunteer Parent-Teacher-Association (PTA) reinforces our culture of family by scheduling and planning many free after school events such as a dine-outs at local restaurants, school dances, a pancake breakfast and bingo, and a school carnival. They partner with us for theme-based after school activities providing food and volunteers. They support us financially for a variety of materials that supplement our STEAM-focused curriculum allowing all of our students equal opportunity for varied hands-on learning.

3. Professional Development:

We do not limit ourselves to a prescriptive, one-size-fits-all Professional Development (PD), rather just as we would for our students, we differentiate our PD allowing for meaningful and practical application. Topics and activities for PD are determined through student data, our School Improvement Plan (SIP), and staff feedback. The primary purpose of our PD is to build teacher capacity, competency, and confidence.

At the district level, required PD is standards based work in grade level and content specialist teams occurring two to three times a year. This time is beneficial in that it allows for collegiality across district grade level teams where strategies, resources and ideas are shared and intentional planning occurs. Optional PD is provided from district level staff in a myriad of areas focusing on technology and content areas. One can choose to attend an after school class or work one-on-one with a content specialist within the classroom.

Within our building, all staff, including administration, learn and reflect alongside one another. Through shared leadership, we strive to empower one another while at the same time providing safe supports to advocate for positive change in instruction. Knowledge is power and provide time to process and implement the knowledge gained from PD. We provide PD on a weekly basis within our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). The first 40 minutes of PLCs are devoted to grade level data while the last 20 minutes focus on learning from one another. Topics range from implementation of Math Talks to reading strategies with teacher leaders facilitating the conversations. PD is also provided on a twice monthly basis when one-on-one meetings occur with the STEAM Program Coordinator. Conversation topics are determined by individual staff goals and the SIP. This time allows for individualized PD in a non-evaluative manner allowing staff to be vulnerable in order to grow their professional capacity. Additionally, monthly staff meetings include a wide range of topics from which to learn including

culturally responsive instruction, growth mindsets, group work, etc. Furthermore, staff also are observed, non-evaluatively, three times a year by either a district Q-Comp coach or the principal. Each observation includes a pre-conference to check in on goals and look-fors, the observation, and the post-conference where scripts are reviewed, conversations on improvement occur, and future goals are made. For staff wanting even more, which many do, optional book studies exist with topics chosen by teachers and facilitated by the Program Coordinator.

Professional development also occurs within the frame of leadership. Student teachers are commonplace in classrooms. Our staff are frequently called upon to review and write district curriculum, facilitate district PD, and even to provide PD outside the school district.

With intentional PD, staff are provided a platform from which to learn, practice, process and continue to implement with support systems in place. It is through this method that our students are the true benefactors. Our staff are continually ‘upping their game’ as they become distinguished in practices resulting in rigorous and relevant learning for the students.

4. School Leadership:

We operate within a structure of shared leadership with a principal who intentionally develops herself and teachers to assume a variety of leadership roles. We each carry the responsibility to share strengths all the while providing support to improve practices and implement successful programming focused on student achievement. This directly correlates to student success - socially, emotionally, and academically - as students witness staff work collaboratively, support one another, problem solve, brainstorm, and create alongside one another. Another aspect modeled for students by staff is the importance placed on academics through the lens of lifelong learning. Within our team of 27, 93% of our certified teachers have at least one Master's degree, 26% have their Educational Administrative license, and 7% have their Doctoral degree.

The administrative team consists of a head principal, administrative intern and STEAM program coordinator. Each role guides and supports the systems and structures focusing on the whole-child. The principal balances the task of supporting while leading. She allows teachers to explore, expand, create, and take risks. The administrative intern provides supports in all regards and is the go-to person for questions regarding testing, behavioral support, scheduling, MTSS, etc. The program coordinator strives to empower teachers to be confident and competent in STEAM planning and instruction. Through modeling, team teaching, supporting, and advocating, this team of three works collaboratively to ensure the mission and vision of SEA is implemented daily. In addition, each school year the administrative team along with a group of teachers develop a School Improvement Plan (SIP) which define our targeted work to raise achievement for all students. It is the responsibility of the administrative team to share and put into practice the SIP to the entire staff. For example, in this year’s SIP, we have a focus on improving proficiencies with our black students. Data shows there was an increase in this sub-group’s achievement gap. Together, as a team, we have intentionally provided PD focused on best practices that support and empower our black students creating a learning environment that provides structures for success. Not only is PD provided, but content is processed, practiced and reviewed by team leads to ensure full integration and implementation.

To move the SIP work forward, SEA has leadership teams reflective of each staff grouping and include an Instructional Leadership Team, an Equity Team, and a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) Team. These teams meet monthly to support the components of the SIP related to curriculum and instruction, culturally relevant teaching practices, and/or school culture/climate. It is the responsibility of all team members to share the minutes of the meeting, the action plan, and the commitment required of others to make it happen. A phrase often heard in the gathering of staff groups is, ‘teamwork makes the dream work’ indicating full staff buy-in and support of our shared leadership philosophy.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

When soliciting feedback for the completion of this application, the one practice, mentioned repeatedly, that stakeholders believed influenced student achievement and defined our successes is inquiry focused instruction and learning. At the School of Engineering and Arts (SEA), inquiry occurs in all spaces and places expanding upon each child's innate sense of wonder and curiosity. At SEA, inquiry looks and sounds like student voice and choice, risk taking, collaboration, brainstorming, perseverance, and high expectations.

Within teaching, inquiry is evident in student driven projects where learners create questions, define their search for answers, and showcase findings as defined by the learner. Inquiry can be found with the types of questions that are asked of and between students and staff. In addition to questions that are specific and of high rigor, answers that provide evidence to claims with supporting details, are the norm. During instruction, teachers do not provide answers, instead utilize Socratic instruction guiding students to be thinkers and problem solvers.

Within staff interactions, inquiry occurs via cooperative work and collaboration - both vertically and horizontally. Staff challenge one another and participate in reflective conversations which deflects stagnation and encourages risk taking and growth. Staff are willing to try new strategies and embrace ambiguity in order to keep up with our ever-changing society and needs for our students.

Inquiry focused instruction and learning encapsulates differentiated instruction, meets multiple learning styles, and empowers students for the real world. Our students learn to be independent thinkers and problem solvers. Our students learn how to be powerful with their voice meaning they can advocate for themselves, think critically, and assert knowledge without being disrespectful or rude. Our students work well in diverse groups because of their experiences in inquiry instruction. They take into account all voices, communicate with one another without marginalization, and create polished, finished products.

Our growth mindset work parallels the tenets of inquiry focused instruction and learning. Students and staff are vulnerable risk takers who learn from mistakes, yet continue in their quest for answers. They are not hesitant to scrap one method in favor of trying things another way in order for success to occur, yet at the same time have developed a "stick-to-it-iveness" with perseverance and grit to stick things out. Students and staff readily seek, accept, and provide constructive feedback causing pause for reflection and improvement. Within all of this, a common word has emerged, often tacked onto frustrated "can'ts". The power of YET is evident throughout all of SEA. Our future resides within our school. While they have not YET mastered life past ten years of age, they are indeed going to be world changers.