

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):
- 13 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 20 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	23	23	46
1	23	31	54
2	32	33	65
3	40	30	70
4	38	24	62
5	28	35	63
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	184	176	360

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 9 % Black or African American
 - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 78 % White
 - 4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 11%

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

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	31
(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)]	39
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	361
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 36%
Total number students who qualify: 131

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
47 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>4</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>19</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>3</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>10</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: 6
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.	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

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	95%	96%	96%	96%	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.

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.

Learning together, empowering others, achieving common goals, and discovering potential.

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

William Bryant Elementary (WBE) is a Title I Targeted Assistance school located in Blue Springs, Missouri, a suburb of Kansas City. WBE is a part of the Blue Springs R-IV School District (BSSD), a K-12 public education system that provides high quality academic programming to families residing in the communities of Blue Springs, Lee's Summit, Grain Valley, and Independence. The principal community of Blue Springs is comprised of approximately 55,000 residents.

As one of 13 district elementary schools, WBE is student centered, family oriented, and community supported. WBE sits in a neighborhood where students have the ability to walk to school, can ride the bus, or are dropped off and picked up by car. WBE's 360 K-5 students are focused on academic goal setting and enjoy a wide variety of customized opportunities to find their genius. Of the diverse student population, 36% qualify for the Federal Free or Reduced Lunch program and 22% are minority.

WBE has a strong, dedicated staff, with 38% of the teachers being at the school for 10 years or more and 96% possessing advanced degrees. Staff use their skills and talents to benefit students and have established effective working relationships with parents and local patrons. Dynamic partnerships have been established with community members who engage actively with students by sharing directly in academic learning, behavior interventions, and overall classroom and school success. As an affiliate of the Leader in Me alliance, WBE has not only achieved exemplary Lighthouse School status, but has also been recognized as a Lighthouse School with Academic Distinction.

Under the direction of the current principal, WBE embarked on a cultural change by adopting the Leader in Me model and a positive behavior supports approach to discipline. Doing so afforded students the opportunity to become self-directed learners, earn respect, become partners in shared decision-making, take ownership for their behavior, develop a strong sense of empowerment, and attain high levels of achievement within and outside the walls of the school. Implementation of a staff CARE (Children Always Require Excellence) Team has made it possible to provide a "safety net" for catching and reacting quickly to the complex challenges encountered by students, including but not limited to: academics, attendance, behavior, social/emotional concerns, and/or health needs. In addition, every teacher participates in helping students set and meet goals, provides triage, and communicates high expectations. All of these strategies permeate the building and both promote and reinforce a common theme, which is "These are our kids!"

WBE students learn what's necessary for success in any setting, including responsibility, goal setting and attainment, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, active listening, initiative, self-direction, cultural awareness, public speaking, presentation-making, grit, and teamwork. Instead of viewing children through the lens of a normal distribution curve, each is seen as highly capable, competent leader.

A key component of WBE's success equation is evidence-based practice. To heighten individual accountability, attention is focused on SMART (i.e., specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and time based) goals and using data points (e.g., achievement, behavior, attendance, job performance) to gauge progress over time and assure designated objectives are replaced by new, more rigorous ones. WBE has gone public with benchmark artifacts – displaying them in classrooms, hallways, the multi-purpose room, etc. – and enacted a self-monitoring process whereby students reflect and report upon their growth via individual conferences with teachers and parents. Through a collaborative approach, all stakeholders – from students to cafeteria workers – know current achievement levels (e.g., reading, degree of math proficiency), action steps for continued improvement (e.g., attendance or behavior targets), and desired performance targets.

WBE staff are provided needs assessment identified, strengths-based professional development. Dedicated collaboration time is reinforced by district core content instructional coaches who facilitate delivery, modeling, and progress monitoring, and engage in reflective conversations about necessary improvements. Long-term planning accelerates the learning process, a wide variety of instructional tools are utilized to enact best practice, and teachers directly support each other. There is a strong sense of family and camaraderie, and accomplishments are shared, recognized, and publicly celebrated!

As a Targeted Title I school, WBE conducts numerous off-hour activities, including before and after school clubs and well-attended student and parent reading, math, and science evening and weekend offerings. These shared learning experiences create a sense of partnership, assure that everyone is on the same page, and clearly illustrate that everything accomplished is for and about the kids. All students have designated roles and attend leadership-related meetings. Peer modeling has been implemented by pairing intermediate with primary level students to solve problems and achieve common objectives. Monthly recognition assemblies provide a forum for positively acknowledging individual and group growth. Parents take an active role in promoting family-oriented events and work tirelessly to enhance the climate and culture of the building. Ultimately, the entire school community does everything possible to help all students achieve success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Classroom instruction at WBE is learner centered and extends beyond concept mastery by enabling students to collaborate, create, and explore new interests. A balanced literacy approach – Pathways to Reading (PTR) – equips teachers to effectively address the literacy needs of beginning (K-2nd) and struggling (3rd grade up) readers. Professional development (PD) is provided and supported by content experts (Terry Clinefelter) and district instructional coaches and has increased teacher understanding and application of the five scientifically validated elements of the reading process – Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension.

Technical assistance and high quality PD are provided to WBE staff by content experts in the areas of reading comprehension (Ellin Keene, Debbie Miller), writing process (Katherine Bomer), vertical progression of K-5 writing units (Matt Glover), and word ladders to develop reading fluency (Tim Razinski). Other important aspects of WBE’s comprehensive literacy approach include differentiated small group instruction in grades K-2; Reader’s Workshop strategies; student-led conferencing; heterogeneous and homogeneous skill grouping; book clubs; academic triage, goal setting, progress monitoring/tracking, and other focused supports for underperforming and special needs students; Read Alouds; imagery to enhance comprehension; direct literacy coach facilitation and intervention; incorporation of Raz-Kids audio books; dyslexia training; establishment of digital (Starfall series) and traditional lexile-leveled classroom libraries; the “40 Book Challenge” incentive project in which students read literature from a variety of genres over the course of the school year; and ongoing use of district common and Scholastic Reading Inventory assessments to gauge concept mastery. In addition, WBE has established a literacy lab (English/Language Arts) to refine best reading and writing practice through reflective collaboration, active research, data collection, and information sharing.

At WBE, defined learning tracks and grade specific, standards-aligned math curriculum are utilized to advance students from facts, operations, and procedural fluency to pre-algebra and geometry. Through needs-based, aligned, and coordinated PD; instructional coach guidance and support; ongoing engagement with field experts such as Greg Tang; student-directed data and progression tracking; math centers and games to reinforce and strengthen skills; effective use of district common assessments; teacher triaging, conferencing, vertical teaming, math lab and grant participation, and off-hour tutoring; reinforcement and enrichment experiences such as Math Workshop, Math Readers, Go Math, and Reflex Math; math clubs and parent take home nights; and a collegial learning environment that encourages meaningful, coherent interactions; WBE students effectively develop the strategies, techniques, and content knowledge necessary to make connections, deeply understand and navigate the world of math, and successfully transition from elementary to middle school.

To help students think critically, create, investigate, research, problem solve, and innovate, WBE K-5 teachers have: implemented interactive, hands-on Project Lead the Way (PLTW) STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) modules; incorporated Science Picture Perfect lessons (high quality non-fiction literature); adopted Raz Kids enrichment and intervention resources; added Makerspaces utilizing a variety of technology-related design and prototype development/manufacturing tools; partnered with the PTA to purchase I-pads and coding apps; attended PD seminars with science content experts such as Mike Heithaus; worked continuously with district instructional coaches to better engage students in science and inspire them to use their natural curiosity to explore surroundings through an immersive, real-life process; and directly participated in a Federal grant funded summer outreach project – Science Matters – that focused on the study of different ecosystems and produced a science instructional video used in classrooms across the country.

For WBE students, social studies content is integrated, differentiated, cross-curricular, and performance-based, with civic responsibility and tenets of government being embedded in the Leader in Me model. Active engagement is demonstrated via “running for office” (school jobs), community service projects with local nursing homes, reading with local governmental officials, and partnering with business representatives

in a kindness initiative. Other noteworthy components include virtual and on-site field trips (School of Economics), Nearpod digital and My World project-based lessons, simulations of historic events, home-school projects related to Missouri State studies, Career awareness concept exploration and Career Day activities, and use of resource supports such as the Scholastic Weekly Reader. This authentic approach takes into consideration learner strengths and interests and helps reinforce WBE's mission of providing students the knowledge, concepts, strategies, skills, and experiences needed to be productive, participatory citizens in today's challenging, diverse, and constantly changing world.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

WBE K-5 students utilize critical thinking, self-expression, and current technology to create and develop a passion for the visual arts. Teacher designed, cross-disciplinary, core-connected curriculum helps enhance content knowledge base, and a flipped instructional approach increases staff-to-student interactions (i.e., as teacher prepared/performed instructional videos are shown, movement around the classroom results in greater degree of direct engagement with students). Student "Art Leaders" use different media formats to produce legacy pieces, take charge of their work environment, and perform designated jobs (e.g., set up and take down displays, physically maintain school art centers). Instruction is strongly supported by high quality, content-specific PD, and covers topics such as product design, aesthetics, and art history/culture.

K-5 music programming incorporates a broad range of resources, including Quaver and Share the Music curriculum and music journaling. Weekly classroom instruction occurs in a dedicated room supported by current technology and a large inventory of district provided musical instruments. The learning environment requires student interaction and movement, and features brain-based strategies to enhance focus, appreciation, understanding, and retention. PD is on-going and offered through workshops, conferences, conventions, in-school or off-site seminars, and by artists in residence. Curriculum and instruction are reinforced by evening grade level music performances at monthly PTA meetings, the district's annual 5th grade level Singfest event, and the "Classy Cats" extra-curricular 3rd-5th grade choir group that includes nearly 100 students, meets weekly at 7:30 AM, and performs at WBE, other schools, and for patrons at a wide variety of greater community functions.

Physical education class employs a brain-based approach, with district curriculum being supported by linked resources (Jump into Action, Play 60), field trips (Swim to Success), awards (President's Fitness), and growth monitored software (FITNESSGRAM). Extracurricular opportunities (Bobcat Boogie Dance Club, Bobcat Running Club) bolster learned concepts and build recreational interest. Members of the unique 3rd-5th grade Circus Skills Club learn to juggle, ride unicycles of varying height, and choreograph a culminating "Big Top" performance event. Beyond instilling fundamental skills, attitudes, and behaviors essential to ensure fitness, health, and nutritional wellness, age-appropriate instruction emphasizes and facilitates efficient motion and movement patterns, promotes student-directed goal setting and accomplishment, accommodates body systems development, links content across the curriculum, provides exposure to new experiences, stresses the importance of healthy lifestyle choices and safe practices, and addresses the personal-social competencies essential for good sportsmanship, fair play, and meaningful team interactions.

The WBE Library Media Center (LMC) is not simply a place to check out books, but rather is an invaluable resource area in which students: engage in critical thinking, writing, and research skills; spark new interests through different genres of literature; learn how to appropriately use information technology (Internet safety, cyberbullying prevention, digital footprint); evaluate content validity (online resources); and use hand-on Makerspace Stations to create and explore, including OzoBots (coding), Little Bits and Snap Circuits (circuitry), origami (spatial relationships), and Legos (construction projects).

A full-time counselor provides individualized and group supports to students, topical classroom presentations, and serves as a community resource. Emphasis areas are family dynamics, making friends, stranger danger, body safety, school adjustment, study skills, resiliency, behavior management, problem solving, and college and career preparedness. In conjunction with the CARE Team process, the WBE counselor also helps meet the specialized needs of students through personalized learning interventions and project-based experiences.

By way of its Student Senate, WBE 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders engage in on- and off-site service projects. To participate in Student Senate, students must submit a written application in which they identify new ways to improve and/or make a difference in their school and surrounding community. As a part of the Student Senate process, leadership groups have been formed in the areas of recognition (Random Acts of Kindness), media (WBE TV), fundraising, and public relations. WBE TV produces informative monthly news shows featuring upcoming school events and activities, with the participating students being in charge of segment ideas, script writing, filming, editing/production, and broadcasting.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

All WBE stakeholders – regular and special educators, administrators, the counselor, parents, and, when applicable, students – work together collaboratively to understand and manage the complex relationships that exist between instruction, learning, assessment, and academic success. As a Title I Targeted Assistance school, teachers are highly qualified and extremely capable. Instruction is tiered so that K-5 student potential is maximized across the learning spectrum – IEP to gifted/talented. Methodology is adaptive, and resources are used to help those most at-risk in reading and/or math. Strategies are differentiated, authentic, and project-based; grounded in effective scientific research; reflect best practice in the field; feature current technology; align with general classroom instruction/curriculum; and strengthen core content programming. Students in need of specialized assistance are pulled from the regular classroom setting as little as possible and receive direct support via small groups, before- and after-school tutoring, and summer programming. On-going monitoring of progress makes it possible to determine whether or not enacted interventions are working and/or require modification. Emphasis is placed on parental involvement and family literacy, and a Parent-School Compact clearly communicates what is expected of stakeholders. Planning reflects the actions taken to drive improvement and advance achievement, and professional development is structured in a manner that enables teachers to customize learning experiences and ensure student performance.

Common WBE classroom instructional approaches include small groups (Readers, Writers, and Math Workshop), individualized supports (A+ high school-age tutors, Difference Makers adult mentors, Peer-Triage/Buddy Partnering), literacy coach collaboration and modeling, Project Lead the Way (PLTW) and Makerspace project-oriented exploration labs, STEM-related art and library class activities, and cutting edge technology facilitated intervention and enrichment offerings (Osmos, Nearpod, RAZ-Kids, Newsela, Zern). Scaffolding, shaping, connecting to prior knowledge, journaling (leadership notebooks), inferring/deductive reasoning, cause-effect inquiry, mental imaging, hands-on manipulation, graphic organizers, and constructive feedback are also used to customize learning.

Instructional methodology is direct and personalized; evaluated for effectiveness; and graduates to a more performance-based approach as students advance from the primary to intermediate level (e.g., Pathways, PLTW). English/Language Arts, math, science, and social studies incorporate workshop model tenets, and are reinforced and enhanced via state-of-the-art educational technology. A wide variety of content delivery configurations, formats, and participation approaches (e.g., pair-share, small groups, mini lessons, work stations, cooperative learning, book studies, Readers' Theater) strengthen classroom practice, increase engagement, and result in deeper understanding as teachers facilitate learning, and students across ability and grade levels conduct authentic conversations about key concepts, set and attain goals, track growth, and report on progress.

WBE assessment practice is aligned with national and Missouri Learning Standards. Multiple sources of evidence-based data are continuously accumulated and analyzed collectively to gauge skill mastery; drive reflection on effectiveness; illustrate the need for re-teaching and/or reinforcement; identify student strengths and deficits; steer goal setting and attainment; guide implementation of intervention and/or enrichment strategies; and target professional development. Usual data sources at the K-2 grade levels include running record informal and formal miscue observation, DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), Pathways (balanced reading program), A-Z Fluency, and Terra Nova scores. Periodic benchmark (end-of-unit tests, writing prompts), digital/web-based (Scholastic Reading Inventory, EdCite), portfolio/work sample, perceptual survey, and standardized (district common, annual Missouri Assessment Program) measures denote growth and progress at the 3-5 grade levels. A similar approach is employed for math (Go Math, Greg Tang, and Reflex Math performance inventories). All K-5 students are expected to

achieve on level, and those scoring “at risk” receive focused assistance. Students and parents are provided frequent feedback and conference about results. The WBE principal routinely reports on academic progress and shares growth with appropriate district level personnel, the Board of Education, and the greater community at large.

To assure that the achievement gap between sub-groups are less than 10 percentage points, as well as maintain lofty levels of achievement, the WBE instructional team has implemented vertical data teams, pre- and post-testing, student-led conferencing, parent involvement opportunities (Academic Nights), highly engaging clubs (Media Leaders, Math, Circus Skills, Classy Cats, Student Senate, Bobcat Boogie Dance, Running), comprehensive student and staff leadership initiatives (Leader in Me, CARE Team), and Positive Behavior Supports methodology (PBS). Ultimately, all stakeholders share in the decision-making process and take responsibility for personal, program, and school success.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

WBE staff work tirelessly to ensure a culture of caring that is characterized as welcoming (student ambassadors/greeters), united (staff and parent partnerships), safe (Olweus project), and child focused (peer triage, student buddies, CARE Team); promotes leadership (Leader in Me jobs, Student Senate positions) and social/emotional wellness (7 Habits); is actively engaging (Media, Math, Circus Skills, Classy Cats, Bobcat Boogie Dance, and Running Clubs) and motivating (character education assemblies, class parties); builds a strong sense of belonging, responsibility, pride, and ownership (student-led conferencing, PBS); celebrates accomplishment (academic performance assemblies); and promotes quality work (student work displays/showcases). Expectations are high for all stakeholders; communication is open and two-way; feedback is constructive; positive results are commended; modeling, coaching, and technical assistance are offered freely; and emphasis is placed on developing the skills, competencies, and confidence necessary to succeed within and outside the classroom.

The WBE learning environment is leadership-oriented, empowering, and positive. All stakeholders are encouraged to demonstrate kindness during daily interactions (random acts, personal notes, comments during class meetings), and accomplishments are acknowledged and celebrated often (daily announcements, recognition assemblies). Student learning styles are identified and immediately addressed (dyslexia), high performance is the norm, and the bar is set high pertaining to personal goal setting and attainment, including for those students who are at-risk in reading and math. Classrooms are a place where learning is valued, and bullying, being disruptive, or prohibiting others from maximizing potential is never okay. Students model desired behaviors, and are viewed as thinkers who are capable of finding new ways to help themselves, others, and the community improve.

At WBE, morale, trust, and acceptance are high. Teachers have a voice and are valued, empowered to actively contribute to school success, and recognized for strengths and contributions to the learning community (Teacher of the Year Award). Avenues are available to address needs in a way that takes emotion out of the equation (PBS, CARE Team) and clearly reinforces the notion that the kids in the building belong to all staff, not just an individual classroom teacher. It's fine to seek out and admit the need for help, and staff are encouraged to bring new ideas forward for the benefit of the entire school. Practice and procedures are clear, consistent, reasonable, and relevant, and both principal and professional development supported. All staff are involved in collaborative teams (Vertical/Action, PD, CARE, Vision, Lighthouse) and are committed to improving school climate/culture.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

WBE staff realize that the foundational attitudes, habits, knowledge, and skills students acquire at home are powerful factors affecting school and learning. Accordingly, parents and community patrons are viewed as valuable partners, ambassadors, and outstanding resources for achieving student success.

As a Title I Targeted Assistance school, WBE conducts highly attended Academic Nights focusing on the reading and math content areas in order to help parents more effectively connect with teaching staff, understand current instructional methodology, and better support what is taught in the classroom at home. Topic-focused informational meetings are also held to highlight areas of interest and/or implemented school initiatives (7 Habits, Project Lead the Way STEM curriculum, PBS), and periodic recognition assemblies are conducted to celebrate academic and/or performance-related accomplishments (Lighthouse Award, Super Bobcat, attendance). To enhance the experience; build more familial, welcoming, and collaborative relationships; and increase the degree/scope of family participation; food is usually provided at before and after school functions.

WBE parents engage in goal setting and student-led conferences, attend Leadership Day events, and volunteer at collective experiences such as Track and Field Day, Book Fairs, and Grandparents/Special Friends Day. Parents also share their expertise (Career Day), advocate on behalf of school change and/or

improvement efforts (Leader in Me), and take part in critical success equation decisions affecting WBE, including those related to facility enhancements (district levy and bond referendum campaigns).

In conjunction with the local PTA unit, WBE staff co-host family and patron-friendly activities such as Community Leader Breakfasts, Movie Nights, school picnics, Sock Hops, and Pastries with Parents. In addition, students demonstrate/perform learned concepts at monthly PTA general sessions.

Key stakeholders are effectively involved and leveraged in a manner that positively impacts WBE. Staff utilize current technology (Parent Connect Links, Facebook, Go and Reflex Math, nightly planner) to communicate frequently about covered concepts; post and/or publicize assignments, completion timelines, and scoring rubrics; and report performance results respectively (weekly principal email updates, teacher sent progress messages). Under the guidance of the present principal, all WBE stakeholders were catalyzed to make the Leader In Me program a reality, which has produced tangible results related to increased attendance, reduced disciplinary referral rates, heightened academic achievement, and significantly improved school climate and culture. From a broader community perspective, students and parents are involved in meaningful outreach/service projects (Hurricane Harvey relief, Children's Mercy Hospital partnership, Harvesters Turkey for Every Table food drive, campus cleanup, retirement home letters).

3. Professional Development:

WBE teachers across content areas and the tenure spectrum – novice to master educator – participate frequently in high quality, sustained, and connected professional development (PD) within the school and at the district level. PD and academic programming are coordinated system-wide and aligned with national and Missouri Learning Standards. In addition, instruction and learning are improved through practical application and reinforced through observation, mentoring, modeling, demonstration, collaboration/collegiality, timely feedback, and self-reflection.

WBE staff, including special educators, are provided opportunities to network and improve core curriculum understanding and utilization. Team members are tasked with effectively incorporating what is learned and expanding upon best, evidence-based classroom practices so that the learning, social, and emotional needs of students are met (Pathways; Reading, Writing, and Math Workshop; Instructional Technology Tuesdays; Summer Institutes with graduate credit; Leader in Me, PLTW, PBS adoptions; E/LA and math lab implementations; innovative teaching strategies/methodology). As PD is about enhancing teacher capacity, it occurs at WBE with an eye on what staff already know and builds on expertise to improve craft, as opposed to pouring in new content and expecting things to be instantly successful. Another unique aspect is that all activities are subject to rigorous evaluation (exit surveys, assessment data tracking), examined critically to determine impact, and shared with peers.

Throughout the school year, WBE staff experience significant job-embedded setting supports, including induction training; on-going PD; mentoring; modeling; dedicated instructional coach and content expert time (Ellin Keene, Debbie Miller, Terri Clinefelter, Katherine Bomer, Greg Tang, Matt Glover, Tim Rasinsky); on and off site collegial/collaborative classroom observation, practice, and discussion opportunities (vertical teaming, book studies, PD days, institutes, and conferences; School Improvement Grants); and research-oriented immersion offerings (E/LA and math labs). Furthermore, unique organizational programming and operational structures have taken root at WBE through purposeful, school-directed PD based upon shared decision-making and a drive for continuous improvement (adoption of Leader in Me and PBS methodology). These initiatives have directly affected leadership, school climate/culture, and academic achievement (heightened MAP test reading and math scores, Lighthouse and Lighthouse with Academic Distinction Awards).

WBE staff acknowledge that time has long passed when teachers can simply walk into classrooms, close the door, and just wing it alone. They also realize that to become better at their work and close sub-group learning gaps, they must take personal responsibility for their own practices, principles, and professional growth.

4. School Leadership:

As a Title I Targeted Assistance and Leader in Me “Lighthouse” designated high performing school, the philosophical perspective of valuing the whole child and being globally committed to K-5 student achievement is clearly evident. Under the facilitation of the principal, Leader in Me and PBS methodology was adopted and structures were established to meet learners’ needs, promote shared accountability and ownership, and transform climate and culture. Teacher-directed leadership teams (Vision, Lighthouse, CARE, vertical) were also implemented to plan, guide, find solutions, galvanize, and energize the growth and improvement process; keep current with best research-based practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment; evaluate impact of outcomes; and facilitate coaching, mentoring, and PD requirements.

WBE instructional leaders actively participate in all aspects of school decision-making, think with the end in mind, embrace change, navigate challenges (student differences/diversity), customize educational encounters to increase learning, and make classroom environments fun, motivating, and engaging. They also work tirelessly to close achievement gaps between typically high and traditionally low performing at-risk groups, including ELL, special education, Section 504, and below level reading and math.

As academic leaders, students track their own assignments, attendance, and behavior, including kindness acts; set goals; monitor progress; and conduct parent attended performance conferences. Leadership attributes are developed and demonstrated by applying for jobs/positions/roles (Student Senate), creating new ways of doing things (Peer Buddies/Triage Leaders), and conducting outreach initiatives (Leadership Day). Not only do students master core content concepts, they are taught effective communication and problem-solving skills (Leader in Me “7 Highly Effective Habits”), and learn lessons reinforced in the home that ensure an entire lifetime of success (PBS strategies).

Through the Leader in Me and PBS initiatives, WBE stakeholders have become empowered and found their voice. By expanding leadership potential and maximizing individual talents and gifts, operational practice is collaborative, intentional, and synergized; stakeholders are more capable and better equipped to guide renewal efforts; and the mission of providing powerful and productive school experiences has been achieved. Parents and community partners share responsibility for mobilizing commitment and resources, and believe that unified, purposeful actions can significantly enhance performance, policy, programming, and practice. Just as broader stakeholder involvement has been identified as an effective school improvement strategy, it has also proven to be similarly beneficial for facilitating sustainable WBE change. Ultimately, all stakeholders understand what WBE is about and are fully focused on ensuring dynamic, proactive, and participatory leadership and K-5 student success.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

WYE stakeholders are committed to meeting the needs of the whole child. Staff believe academic success has roots in students' lives earlier than kindergarten, as they come to formal learning differing in their family/home environment; socioeconomic resources; cultural backgrounds; levels of Pre-K preparation; capabilities; experiences; intellectual and social orientations; expectations; aspirations; and personality types. These individual, contextual differences affect students in how they perceive themselves and what they see as achievable. Staff know that contrary to the popular view of education as a powerful assimilating and mediating force capable of removing child circumstance influences, the fact is they rarely disappear. Thus, the Leader in Me treat was implemented so all students, even those deemed as "at-risk," are treated exactly the same, as capable individuals, full of unlimited potential, who through skills building, accountability, grit, and the willingness to improve, can succeed.

In conjunction with the Leader in Me initiative, specific strategies are emphasized, including high expectations manifested in curriculum, climate, and practices; coherence in alignment and sequencing of content; integration of student experiences and prior knowledge; opportunities for active, collaborative discovery; frequent assessment and feedback; respect for diversity of race, ethnicity, cultures, talents, abilities, and ways of learning; emphasis on foundational skills; and the development of connections between classroom instruction and the working world. Teachers promote and develop a shared realization that high performance for everyone is the primary aim, and that it is not simply a matter of practice, integration, or coordination, but rather one of regularly and energetically communicating the same message – all K-5 students, as leaders, can experience academic success.

As incorporated within the Leader in Me program, a number of paralleled themes were identified that encourage forward-thinking and favorably impact students' chances for academic success, including the direct, conscious use of organizational influences to pursue, implement, and facilitate high performance within and outside the classroom; strongly coupled, school-wide coordination across and within all grade levels and departments; intentional relationship building and awareness of each other's efforts, practices, and work; and engagement in information gathering, measurement, assessment, and reporting of data directed toward continuous improvement. Ultimately, incorporation of reflective-practitioner and self-regarding institution methodology, in which ongoing analysis of factors promoting progress are thoroughly engrained in the way business is conducted in the classroom and school, have made it possible for all WBE stakeholders to demonstrate growth and maximize potential.