

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):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	32	34	66
1	49	32	81
2	40	29	69
3	38	36	74
4	43	41	84
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	202	172	374

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 92 % White
 - 3 % 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: 15%

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

Our school averages a class size of students transferring in and out of the school each year. We have several mobile home areas and a large apartment complex that results in renters moving locations.

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	28
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	24
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	52
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	345
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 5%
19 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 52%
Total number students who qualify: 194

8. Students receiving special education services: 26 %
97 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>3</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>5</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>70</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>8</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: 12
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.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 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	96%	96%	96%	0%	0%
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.

Together we are learning, leading, leaving a legacy.

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

Located halfway between Springfield and Willard in Southwest Missouri, Willard Central Elementary serves the unique combination of small town and mid-sized city. Opened in 1996 to support a growing community while maintaining the district's philosophy of creating neighborhood school campuses, Willard Central is located between Willard North and Willard South Elementary Schools. While the school initially served students in kindergarten through fifth grade, the opening of the Willard Intermediate School in 2006 changed the school setting to serve students through fourth grade. In 2011, a new elementary school was opened redrawing the district boundary lines with nearly 75% of the student body being new to Central. Currently, the school serves approximately 385 students. It is a Title I school with half of the student population qualifying for Free or Reduced Lunch services with 92% of the student body identifying as white. While student mobility has fluctuated in the past, the current mobility rate hovers around 15% with an average student-classroom teacher ratio of 21:1.

For the past 14 years, Willard Central has started each day with Community Time. This student-led assembly celebrates student and teacher successes while offering a shared experience for all-school learning and ways to connect as a school family and community. In addition to Community Time, the school family also looks forward to monthly Terrific Tiger Celebrations where students' efforts towards their individual, class and school wide goals are recognized and honored. Another cherished Central tradition is the All-School Family Book Club. For the past 11 years, the school has provided a chapter book for all families and staff members to read together. Upon completing the book, the school hosts a Family Reading Night with activities inspired from the story. The second grade restaurant, an award-winning interdisciplinary unit allows students to apply for a loan, interview for positions and then open a business hosting and serving lunch to family and friends is another tradition students look forward too. A more recent tradition and rite of passage established over the past four years has been the fourth grade etiquette training and celebration banquet. This culminating event allows students to put their manners into action while recognizing their time and growth over their past five years at Central at a local reception venue. As a Leader in Me School, the Willard Central Team has also started hosting yearly leadership days to spotlight student leadership and goal setting efforts in the school. To date nearly 120 different school teams have visited the school to see this model in action. These activities and strategies evidence some of the ways Willard Central encourages and challenges all students to develop and display their full potential.

Over the past 22 years, the school has enjoyed several milestones. In 1999 Willard Central became an Accelerated School. In 2015 they embarked on the Leader in Me process. Currently, the school has completed their readiness check and anticipate achieving Lighthouse School status for fidelity to this school-wide leadership model in the spring of 2018. Other school achievements include the Leavy Award for Private Enterprise in Education through The Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge in 2012 for the second grade restaurant and our principal being named the 2018 Southwest Missouri Distinguished Principal for the Missouri Association of Elementary Principals.

School culture has been a focal point for Willard Central for more than a decade. This focus led to the implementation of the Leader in Me process. Through this process, the school's efforts targeted the areas of leadership for all, aligning academics and creating culture. All students and staff members of Willard Central serve in a leadership role in the school. Staff members are empowered to share in the leadership and direction of the school. From public speaking to grounds and landscaping teams, students apply for leadership roles throughout the school to grow and serve in areas of interest. Students also take ownership over their learning through the goal setting process tracking individual, class, grade level and school wide goals. From academic goals to personal goals around fitness or learning to tie their shoes, students from kindergarten to fourth grade identify strategies and monitor their progress toward reaching their goals. This ownership of learning and being a leader in their own school has created a unique culture of respect and trust focused on growing the whole child.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Willard Central Elementary utilizes the Lucy Calkins' Units of Study for Reading and Writing as the backbone of our ELA curriculum. This resource provides spiraling and consistency throughout the grade levels aligned to the district-set scope and sequence for these units. Additionally, Central teachers also integrate other best practice curriculum resources and structures such as Words Their Way, reading and writing workshop models, guided reading and writing, Fountas and Pinnell Word Study and the Daily 5 structure to best support and differentiate for learners while addressing the learning standards. This integration of a variety of best practice and research-based resources and structures ensures learners are following a progression of reading and writing acquisition. Our core curriculum provides each student in our school the skills they need to develop phonemic awareness, their knowledge of phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. These foundational skills are the building blocks to a comprehensive reading and writing program. Students are taught these foundational skills at a developmentally appropriate grade level with the goal in mind that each builds upon the one before. This is done through guided reading, guided writing, shared reading, shared writing and a balanced mix of whole group and small group word study instruction to support each student at their independent level of learning.

Willard Central utilizes the enVision Math 2.0 series to teach the Missouri Learning Standards. This curricular resource was adopted by the district two years ago because of the conceptual approach to teaching and learning mathematics. The program's scope and sequence allow for coherence, rigor and fluency throughout. Through the structure of Daily 3 Math, teachers provide choice, as well as time to guide small group instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners. As a school we believe the foundational skills required for math are learning that math requires precision and mathematical reasoning. Students acquire foundational skills for math through each of these five building blocks to mathematics; numbers, place value system, whole number operations, fractions and decimals and problems solving. The curriculum at our school follows these building blocks as well as allows for us to integrate important skills such as math talk into our instruction. Math talk strategies allow students to develop a deeper understanding of foundational skills and gives students the opportunity to hear other voices and ideas within the classroom.

Recently, Willard Central teachers have begun the process of bundling the new Science Missouri Learning Standards into units focused on the shift in instruction with the Science and Engineering Practices and Cross-Cutting Concepts within the 3-Dimensional Model. Integration of science instruction into reading, writing and math units is a focus of this work. Grade level teachers are developing units and lessons based on the 5E Lesson Plan model to engage students in these instructional shifts. Foundational skills for science are acquired through six basic science skills: observation, communication, classification, measurement, inference, prediction. Students in younger grades tend to focus more on observation and communication while older students may tend to focus more on inference and prediction. Science activities and investigations are open-ended and explorative requiring students to be curious, creative, ask questions and problem solve. The Science and Engineering Practices give students in every grade level the opportunity to problem solve real world situations by using the strategies, skills and tools that are developmentally appropriate.

The Willard School District is beginning the transition to the new Missouri Learning Standards for Social Studies by utilizing the Crosswalk document to start planning for shifts. Currently, Willard Central teachers develop unit and lesson plans utilizing literature and technology resources to integrate content whenever possible. An example of this would be second grade students creating a public service announcement video for the rest of the school explaining the meaning of The Pledge of Allegiance. As a Leader in Me School, focus is given to developing the whole child and the school is devoted to making sure each student's social, emotional and educational needs are being met. The 7 Habits of Happy Kids and the language of the highly effective practices are integrated in lesson planning for every content area. This approach of student learning lends itself to looking outside of the school building and into the community to learn more on becoming a productive member of the community. Students are equipped to find their voice serving as leaders within and beyond the walls of the school.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

As a Leader in Me School, students are also able to expand their skills and interests by serving on leadership teams around these curricular areas. Leading songs for the entire school body at the daily assembly, painting school murals, leading student work-outs at recess, serving as reading buddies across the grade levels and working on the school's yearbook are just a few ways students practically apply learned skills while serving as leaders in the school. All students attend a special area 50 minute class one time per week in physical education, library, art, music and technology.

Over the past decade, the physical education program has been designed to meet physical education learning standards and to use the student's body to support the brain's development for learning. A resource utilized in physical education lesson planning is Ready Bodies, Learning Minds: Cultivating the Complete Child by Athena Oden. The K-1st grade curriculum emphasizes creating opportunities for students to engage their bodies in crossing the midline, various patterned movements, vestibular stimulation, engaging all four quadrants of the body simultaneously combined with building core and upper body strength to support the student in the classroom setting as well. The 2nd-4th grade physical education curriculum focuses heavily on each student being a leader of their personal health, assessing their current level of health, setting personal fitness goals and making cross curricular connections to the importance of lifelong learning to their overall mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health as well.

The American Association of School Librarians has identified a set of common beliefs central to the profession of school librarianship. One of these beliefs states: "Reading is the core of personal and academic competency." With this in mind, learners at the Willard Central Library engage with relevant information resources and digital learning opportunities in a culture of reading. Inquiry learning is promoted and fostered across disciplines. The library contains high-quality digital, print and technology materials that support classroom learning and encourage students to become lifelong learners.

Willard Central Elementary students K-4 have the opportunity to experience choice-based art. Students choose what they want to make, the process and the medium for their art. Students create a detailed plan of their project including a sketch, the art materials needed, what elements of art they use and the content or meaning of their work. Students then self-evaluate their work to identify qualities of their work and areas for continued learning. Fine Arts Night, district level art shows and hallway displays allow students to take pride in displaying their original artwork.

Willard Public Schools support and excel in the fine arts. The K-12 aspect of music education in this district has been a positive contributing factor to this success. Kindergarten through fourth grade music instruction fosters music literacy, offering students opportunities to create, perform and respond to music. Instruction is based off of the 2014 National Music Standards emphasizing conceptual understanding in areas that reflect the actual processes in which musicians engage. The online Quaver curriculum helps to emphasize cross-curricular connections and allows for student engagement and academic retention of skills and knowledge. The Willard Central music instructor strives to ensure the music classroom provides the appropriate environment for whole child development.

The Willard Central technology lab diligently promotes digital citizenship, proficiency of digital tools and develop keyboarding skills. A main objective is to ensure students can use technology safely and responsibly. In an effort to utilize technology as an enhancement to student learning, students are provided with the foundational skills of digital tools then offered opportunities to demonstrate their learning through creation and presentations through the use of 1:1 Chromebooks or classroom sets of iPads. As access and use of computers continues to rise, students are increasingly utilizing computers to create, assess, and communicate learning. At Willard Central, a major focus is providing students opportunities to develop their keyboarding skills. If students are able to type from muscle memory, their writing and cognitive processes will not be interrupted searching for keys. Students who are adept at using both digital tools are aware of the impact they have as a digital citizen are better prepared for their role in the 21st century.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Willard Central is a community of professional learners who seek daily to meet the individual learning needs of our students. The use of our collaborative planning process and fidelity to instruction allows for reflective conversations that center around instruction and student learning needs. Weekly, teachers dedicate time to collaborative planning to identify instructional practices and strategies to best meet their students' and curricular needs. Teachers also dedicate time to collectively review student data and receive professional support to target learning needs. These efforts are supported by the building's instructional coach and may evolve into coaching cycles to assist teachers and teams in refining and expanding their practices.

Our district has adopted a standards-based grading philosophy to report student learning, measured by demonstrating proficiency to the standard. After receiving training at the Marzano Center, the district is currently in the process of identifying priority standards and creating proficiency scales to identify where students are in the progression of learning. This intentional focus allows teachers to target the learning needs of students for proficiency while offering opportunities to extend learning for students who have already mastered the standard.

District developed benchmark assessments and the Developmental Reading Assessment have been used to identify and track areas to support student learning. Recently, the Willard School District has implemented the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) online assessment platform to identify student learning needs and areas for curricular improvement.

At Willard Central, we believe in meeting the students where they are and moving them towards success. Teachers and staff help differentiate instruction to meet the leveled needs of all learners. This is done through a variety of practices including the workshop model for reading, writing and math instruction. By working with students and providing instructional support in a whole group, small group and individual settings, teachers are best able to meet the needs of our students and to help them set goals for continued growth and success.

Willard Central students participate in the goal setting process at the building, grade, and individual levels. Through our Wildly Important Goals (WIGs), students set academic and personal goals and determine the lead measures they will use to help achieve those goals. Through regular check-ins with accountability partners, students track their progress toward their goals. Individual, class, grade level, and school wide scoreboards track progress towards these goals, encouraging students to endeavor for individual learning as well as group success.

Student led IEP meetings empower students to identify and target the areas of learning that will support their learning needs. Including the student on the team gives ownership to assist in planning academic progress. This process also allows the student control on how well they are able to achieve the outcomes and the ability to track their own progress. Furthermore, this allows a voice in the process to know what goals students need to accomplish to be successful. This has greatly influenced student ownership of their learning in both the special services classroom and the regular classroom setting.

Willard Central continuously evaluates student performance to help provide resources for students achieving above or below grade level expectations. All second grade students are initially screened during the beginning of the year using the Naglieri Nonverbal Achievement Test (NNAT-3) to help identify students who may benefit from gifted services. In addition, students at subsequent grade levels may also be identified by classroom teachers and parents to take the NNAT-3 to see if further evaluation for our gifted program may be needed.

Students who may not be meeting grade level expectations may also be referred to our school's Student Intervention Team (SIT). This interdisciplinary team meets weekly to discuss student performance and progress. Together, the team collaborates with the classroom teacher and parents to generate effective tiered interventions to help each individual child become more successful in the classroom. Interventions may involve a variety of services in our building including Reading Recovery, Take Flight Dyslexia Therapy,

Title I Reading Services, English Language Learners services, counseling services as well as occupational, physical and speech/language therapies. Additionally, students can also be referred for intensive, short-term interventions through our Basic Academic Success for Everyone (B.A.S.E) program to target specific academic needs. Regular follow-up meetings are scheduled to monitor progress through the analysis of data collected to determine the effectiveness of the interventions and next steps for support.

Through the use of instructional best practices, Willard Central uses data to continuously monitor student achievement. As students become more involved in their own learning and the goal setting process, students will sustain ownership of their learning now and into the future.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Each day, the students, staff and families of Willard Central join together to celebrate and honor each other's accomplishments at Community Time. This daily ritual together as a school family is a tradition that has lasted nearly 14 years. We gather together in the gym where students share our school mission statement and school song. Student leaders welcome and celebrate student birthdays, classroom recognitions and share the announcements for the day. Teachers and guests then have time to recognize and cheer for specific student celebrations. Through this time together, students, staff and families build memories around collective experiences ranging from turning the principal into a hot fudge sundae to discussions around our school book club, to special presentations by guests, and to student-led service projects for our school or community. Most exciting of all is that this powerful time together as a school family is led by student leaders and takes place before the tardy bell even rings.

As students leave the gym each morning from Community Time, they are reminded and encouraged that they are leaders in our school. As a Leader in Me School, students pass by pictures of themselves with friends, teachers and family modeling the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People displayed on the wall. Students also pass a mural of all of the leaders from our school and the student leadership teams they serve on. Reading, math and attendance "Wildly Important Goals" are displayed for all to see how our classrooms, grade levels, and entire school family is working towards these collective commitments. After students are welcomed into their classrooms by their morning greeter, students are reminded of their individual instructional and personal goals as they check in with their teacher and accountability partners in their student leadership notebooks. From learning to tie their shoes to learning their times tables, students set, track, and celebrate their goals. Students at Willard Central know being a leader is a choice and have the opportunity to lead themselves and others well each day.

Just like students, staff members are empowered to share in the leadership of the school. Through facilitating student leadership teams, leading staff action teams, and collaborative planning practices, each member of the school community has the opportunity to invest and serve in the school in a way that connects to their calling and passion. These efforts ensure a community of professional learners collectively committed to supporting and challenging all learners, not just the students within their own classrooms. This collective commitment of shared leadership cultivates a positive school climate and culture of success.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Parent partnerships and community collaboration have been pivotal in promoting student achievement. Our school's open door policy encourages parents to connect and invest in students' education. From providing learning extension activities in science, fluency support in reading, facilitating a reader's theater, or participating in our all-school family book club, parents are a welcomed part of the learning process.

As patrons enter Central, progress towards learning is visible for all to see. This transparency of student learning fosters a collective responsibility towards student achievement. Through student leadership notebooks and our online reporting platform, parents are aware of their child's learning goals. Through student-led parent/teacher conferences, students model their learning for parents at content area stations. This practice promotes student ownership of their learning and collaboration between parents and teachers for each child's academic achievement. Additionally, some students have even started facilitating their IEP meetings.

As a Leader in Me School, students, staff and community members are leaders responsible for supporting the success of our school and each other. All students apply and interview for classroom and schoolwide roles. Schoolwide leadership roles are often based on student and staff interest and have developed opportunities for unique parent and community partnerships. Our student Grounds and Landscaping Crew have cultivated relationships with master gardeners and local greenhouses to beautify our school campus. The student Entrepreneurial Team has partnered with the middle school vocational technology classes to

design and build a store for school fundraising. Student Speaker Leaders have worked with nationally ranked speech and debate students from the high school to refine their message and mechanics to lead assemblies. These are just a few examples of community partnerships through our leadership initiative.

Additionally, we have strategically partnered with parents to create all-school service projects and leadership events to connect the community to our school's mission. Monthly PTO meetings target student leadership principles. In-depth parent training opportunities and book studies to connect student learning on the 7 Habits and student goal setting to home are also provided. From hosting parent discussion panels to participating in district strategic planning committees, the collaboration between our school and parents has provided a voice for parents to advocate for student learning opportunities at Central to expand across the district and to other schools. This movement has even expanded into training for our local chamber of commerce and discussions for community strategic planning development.

3. Professional Development:

Teachers at Willard Central Elementary are always researching best practices in education to provide high quality instruction for students and to refine their craft. With an internal drive to learn, professional development is a fundamental part of the culture. To support teacher learning efforts, the district has designated early release time each Monday afternoon. This collective time allows for district instructional coaches to plan quality professional development topics focused on targeted needs, curriculum refinement and implementation of new practices. This approach allows for program fidelity and consistency across the district.

The Professional Development Committee at Willard Central Elementary evaluates teacher and student learning needs to identify a professional development focus. Having a collective schoolwide focus streamlines efforts towards a common goal based on our school's Building Improvement Plan. Most recently, efforts and resources have been primarily focused on our three year implementation of the Leader in Me process. Funds are also designated for grade level professional development days with the building's instructional coach based on grade level needs. These grade level days focus on a variety of topics including math training for a new resource implementation, Math Talks, Jan Richardson guided reading lessons, support for implementation of three-dimensional learning with the new Missouri science standards and standards-based grading practices. Through this process, teachers are able to maximize resources while acquiring current, research-based professional development in a small setting. Furthermore, this structure allows for targeted support by the instructional coach familiar with teacher needs. In addition to these resources, a three year rotation has been established for special area and special education teachers to attend professional development opportunities outside of the district to support student achievement in their particular field of instruction.

Individual coaching cycles with the instructional coach are provided for new teachers and teachers new to the district as embedded support as well as for veteran teachers to grow in and refine their practice. During these cycles, the coach meets with the teacher to identify a goal, provides learning opportunities, observes and gives feedback in the identified area. This support allows teachers to develop and refine teaching practices to strengthen instruction and student learning.

This systematic approach to professional development ensures consistency in instructional practices across Willard Central while ensuring fidelity to instructional resources and curricular goals. These intentional efforts have supported student and teacher success.

4. School Leadership:

Willard Central Elementary has a shared leadership model. There are ten leaders that serve on the school's Lighthouse Team. These members include five classroom teachers, a paraprofessional, the school counselor, the physical education teacher, the principal and the PTO president. This team serves as the school's clearinghouse for information and decision making. Each member of the Lighthouse Team also facilitates a staff action team. These action teams fall into three categories: Leadership, Academics and Culture. Staff members and parents serve on these action teams based on strengths and passions. A first

grade teacher serves as the Lighthouse Team Facilitator. The physical education teacher is a past facilitator and current district trainer for the Leader in Me process.

All school activities and initiatives are funneled through the action team process, and action teams are empowered to make decisions in implementing responsibilities under their care. Collaboratively, each team makes a plan for their designated responsibilities. This plan is shared with the Lighthouse Team to identify any areas for consideration; then the team is empowered to carry out their plan. An example of this would be our All-School Family Book Club. The action team purchased copies of a book for the entire school body to read together. They planned activities to engage reading and conversations throughout the book club and then developed a Family Reading Night plan to celebrate the book together as a school family. Their plans were then reviewed by the Lighthouse Team and shared with the staff to enlist support for the events of the evening. The team also partnered with the Parent and Community Action Team who hosted a chili dinner to provide food for the families in attendance. This model is repeated through the domains of Leadership, Academics and Culture for academic goal setting, instructional strategy support, staff social activities, professional learning, school assemblies and student leadership activities.

This process is also mirrored in our Student Lighthouse Team. All students participate in leadership roles and teams across the building. The Student Lighthouse Team approves funding requests for these teams while casting the vision for student leadership to our school and district. Students and their teams are empowered to develop ideas and plans to share through these student and staff avenues to impact change within the school.

Bumps in the road have occurred in the implementation of this shared leadership model, but the refinement of this process ensures a collaborative community of professional leaders and learners committed to our students and school success. While this model is bearing fruit within the school, district and state directives are part of the educational process. When these occur, the information is shared through the appropriate Action Teams to support implementation. If the new implementation cannot flow through this process, the shared leadership of the school staff allows for a collective mindset and efficacy to ensure continued success towards the school mission.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The Leader in Me is a schoolwide improvement model that unleashes the full potential of students and staff. The process is based off of Dr. Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Through staff professional development, teachers and students develop the skills to be self-directed individuals and empowered leaders responsible for their learning. The core paradigms of this model are Everyone Can be a Leader, Everyone has Genius, Change Starts with Me, Educators Empower Students to Lead Their Own Learning, and Develop the Whole Student.

While Willard Central is in their third official year of the Leader in Me process, their journey began about five years ago with a book study. The first year of professional development focused on learning and implementing the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. From hallway displays to remodeling projects, creating a welcoming school atmosphere mirroring this new language and paradigm was also a key focus. One of the most exciting components of this model was the implementation of student leadership teams. Public speaking, movie making, reading buddies, greeters, clean crew and student ambassadors were just a few of the options students had the opportunity to apply and interview for to grow and demonstrate their leadership.

The second year of professional development targeted student learning through the goal setting process. Staff members personally modeled the process of identifying goals, creating action steps to achieve these goals and identifying measures to track their progress. This process was then embraced by students as they developed academic and personal goals. Schoolwide goals in academic areas cascaded to grade level and classroom goals. Data became a tool for supporting student learning as goals were tracked in classrooms and in the hallways through scoreboards. Students tracked their individual goals and progress in their student leadership notebooks. This process fostered student ownership over their learning and provided a shared picture of student learning between school and home.

Year three allowed for refinement of these processes while also providing teacher professional development on empowering instructional practices. The development of high quality instructional practices promoting student engagement and ownership of their own learning was the focal point.

Throughout this process, targeted efforts to invite and train parents and community members in this learning were made. Willard Central staff members and parents co-facilitated a book study introducing the habits to parents. Student speaker leaders and staff trainers utilized school activities to share successes and reinforce the learning around the habits with families. Parent training sessions with childcare were offered to connect leadership and 7 Habits practices between school and home. Leadership events showcasing student job fairs, leadership opportunities and parent and teacher panels were hosted sharing this school model with hundreds of area teachers and multiple community groups. In conjunction with a dedicated staff focused on helping each child succeed and fidelity to the implementation of this process, all of these efforts worked together to establish a strong base of community support and invested parent partnerships to make Willard Central Elementary an exemplary Leader in Me School.