



## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

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

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

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 11 TOTAL

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
<b>PreK</b>	75	53	128
<b>K</b>	38	34	72
<b>1</b>	49	45	94
<b>2</b>	32	42	74
<b>3</b>	50	40	90
<b>4</b>	43	40	83
<b>5</b>	29	44	73
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	316	298	614

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2 % Asian
  - 4 % Black or African American
  - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 87 % White
  - 6 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2016 – 2017 school year: 7%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	18
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	25
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	43
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	608
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1%  
5 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Albanian, Spanish, Arabic, Tibetan, Pashtu

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 32%  
Total number students who qualify: 194

8. Students receiving special education services: 20 %  
120 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>26</u> Autism                  | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                 | <u>3</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness           | <u>13</u> Other Health Impaired                |
| <u>17</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance    | <u>48</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</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: 18
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	16
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	36
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 22:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	96%	94%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes  No

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

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

In partnership with families and the community, empower each student to achieve his or her fullest potential in a challenging, engaging, and encouraging learning environment.

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

## **PART III – SUMMARY**

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The rich history and traditions of Kettering, Ohio, have been cultivated by one of our most distinguished past citizens, inventor Charles F. Kettering. Like its namesake, Kettering City School District is focused on instilling in our students the values of innovation, creativity, perseverance, and community involvement. The mission of Indian Riffle Elementary School, in partnership with families and the community, is to empower each student to achieve his or her fullest potential in a challenging, engaging, and encouraging learning environment.

Indian Riffle Elementary, located in Montgomery County, was originally a junior high school built in 1962 and transitioned to an elementary school in 1983. We are the second largest of eight elementary schools in the district. As a suburban district nestled between Dayton and Cincinnati, Indian Riffle is a Title I school that serves more than 600 students encompassing integrated preschool through grade five. A unique feature of our school is that it hosts the district's all-inclusive program serving students with autism. Our population includes children living in a variety of family arrangement and living situations. We have students from single-parent households and grandparent guardianship. We have students who are homeless, economically disadvantaged, and English learners. The diversity of our student body fosters a sense of tolerance and acceptance among all of our students.

Kettering City School District is well-known for its distinguished school system and was named a "Top 100" school district by Money magazine in 1995. Indian Riffle Elementary has been rated Excellent by the Ohio Department of Education, met all eight indicators, and received letter grades of "A" in both Gap Closing and Overall Progress on the state report card. In the last five years, Indian Riffle Elementary has also been awarded School of Promise, School of Progress, and Step Up To Quality 5-Star Preschool Rating. These examples of excellence foster academic achievement and social competence to support the whole child from preschool through grade five.

All staff is dedicated to encouraging students to reach their full potential. We work together as a team, appreciate and build on each other's strengths, and share ideas to help our students grow and develop 21st-Century Skills such as leadership, teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Our instructional teams collaborate to make data-driven decisions and provide intensive interventions for all students. These interventions are implemented not only during our daily intervention hour but also during our after-school Extended Day program where students receive remediation, enrichment, or extra academic support.

The staff at Indian Riffle Elementary has the belief that we should model the importance of being a valuable, caring member of the community. We cultivate a philanthropic philosophy in our students by supporting a variety of charitable causes. Some of our staff-led activities have included St. Jude Children's Hospital Math-A-Thon, American Heart Association Jump Rope for Heart, Juvenile Diabetes Walk, community food drives, and One For Books to supply books for hurricane-damaged schools.

Former students keep the Firebird spirit by returning to Kettering to raise their families here due to the traditions of our school. We are proud to host generations of families for ice cream socials, book fairs, picnics on the lawn, Family Fun Festivals, STEAM nights, musical programs, Veterans' Day Recognitions, and parent education programs. Families can take advantage of affordable before and after school childcare services in the building.

Our students benefit from staff-led after-school activities including Juggling, Art, and Computer Clubs, Intramurals, Courtyard Creations, Student Council, student-written School Newspaper, Jazzercise, STEM, and Firebird Chorus. Indian Riffle Elementary also hosts community groups after school hours, such as adult and youth basketball, both Boy/Girl Scouts, Indian Guides/Princesses, and summer camps.

The strong connection between the city of Kettering and the Kettering City Schools can be seen through student participation in events and programs like Holiday at Home, Spirit Chain, Youth Leadership Academy, and Partners for Healthy Youth. Students also develop leadership skills by working together to support those who need our help. Students participate in various fundraising activities. Each year our peer-

elected Student Council sponsors a fundraiser that benefits our community. Over the years these student-led efforts have included collecting donations for SICSA Pet Adoption Center, Autism Awareness, St. Vincent de Paul Gateway Shelter for Women and Families, and South Community Caring Hands Pantry. Student Council members also donate their time to assist with school-wide events as well as manage our school supply store. These efforts teach our students the value of giving and the importance of being involved in their community.

We are proud to represent a community that is focused on excellence in education and an outstanding quality of life for all who live in Kettering. In the words of Charles F. Kettering, “High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation.” We are responsible. We are respectful. We are Firebirds. We are Indian Riffle Elementary.

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

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

Indian Riffle Elementary is dedicated to helping our students achieve academic excellence. Educators lay the foundation for the success of all students by aligning curriculum with the Common Core, Ohio Learning Standards, and research-based practices. When teaching specific standards, we begin by using kid-friendly language to communicate our objectives. We use a variety of assessments throughout the year to drive instruction, differentiate, reflect and extend our students' knowledge. Daily intervention hour provides Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions so all students can become independent learners.

All students (K-5) have daily explicit lessons in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, high-frequency words, vocabulary, spelling, comprehension, speaking/listening, and writing. One key element for building foundational skills in reading and writing for younger students is the use of the FUNdations Phonics Program in preschool through third grade. This program is a research-based, multimodal approach to teaching phonics and phonemic awareness. This systematic, explicit instruction gives strategies for building the groundwork for lifelong readers and writers. Our balanced literacy approach begins by exposing students to a concept through whole group instruction. Using scaffolding, teachers then transition into flexible, guided reading groups. In order to achieve grade level comprehension, we select both fiction and nonfiction texts to build background knowledge and increase vocabulary. The goal is to have students independently reading and responding to grade level texts. When teaching the Common Core we use a variety of resources. These include leveled books, mentor texts, current event periodicals, and multimodal texts. Writing is embedded across the curriculum. With this balanced literacy approach, students become proficient in English/Language Arts.

Our mathematical approach creates lifelong problem solvers. Students are provided with concrete, pictorial, and abstract (CPA) opportunities in a rigorous curriculum. At its foundation is an emphasis on number sense to create readiness for computational fluency and automaticity. Students are provided the opportunity to apply that fluency to more advanced mathematical concepts. We use explicit instruction along with kinesthetic opportunities to give students tangible experiences to bring the concept to life. Formative assessments drive instruction to the next stage of the CPA approach. In this stage, we strive to help students make a mental connection between concrete and abstract. Building successful math learners require reasoning and verbalizing along with reflection. This develops their growth mindset and metacognition. Another key component to success is continuous exposure to previously learned concepts to strengthen understanding and lead to mastery. Students are given the opportunity to apply knowledge and use their critical thinking skills in everyday math applications. Our students are successfully achieving standard based objectives in our mathematics curriculum.

An integral part of our science curriculum is providing our students with hands-on, real-life opportunities. We are fortunate to provide a science lab for inquiry-based learning and field trips within our community to enhance our students' understanding. Fifth graders participate in a STEM camp through Wright Patterson Air Force Base. The concepts of life, earth, and physical sciences are brought to life through the district's land lab. We also provide a science fair night for students to showcase their scientific method based projects. In addition, we host a family STEAM night which focuses on science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematical experiences. Teachers provide technology opportunities through the use of online simulations (Gizmos) and educational video conferencing (Polycom) that align with grade level objectives. Much of the science curriculum is also integrated into the English/Language Arts standards.

Our social studies curriculum allows students to engage in civic learning opportunities. Students are involved in Kids Voting and student council elections which expose them to the democratic process. Students are involved in their community by hosting a Veteran's Day program, food drives, and book fairs. Community members come into classrooms to educate students about different careers such as public service workers, city engineers, meteorologists, business owners, and other community workers. Our school counselor visits each classroom on a bi-monthly basis to teach students about respect, responsibility, and appreciation of diversity. We meet our Ohio Learning Standards through publications such as Studies

Weekly, Time For Kids, and Scholastic News. Field trips such as visiting Dayton's own, Carillon Historical Park, enhance learning standards by giving students real-life experiences. These collective opportunities develop the foundational skills for becoming productive citizens in their community.

Indian Riffle Elementary is home to four integrated, five star rated preschool classrooms. We serve students with disabilities and typically developing peer mentors. Our preschool staff promotes growth, independence, self-esteem, and dignity. We believe that children are natural learners who benefit from an enriched, structured and nurturing environment. We model this by using the concepts of discovery and creativity while encouraging cooperation and socialization.

Our Early Learning and Developmental Standards align with The Creative Curriculum which encompasses social-emotional, cognitive, language/literacy, adaptive behavior, and motor skills. We use these standards to provide hands-on opportunities to create lifelong learners as they transition into Kindergarten.

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

Indian Riffle Elementary special area classes support the whole student by creating an inclusive learning environment. Students are offered music, art, physical education, and media center weekly. Kindergarten receives 30 minutes per week of music, physical education, and media center. Grades 1-5 receive 60 minutes per week of music, art, physical education, and 30 minutes in the media center. Preschool integrates music, art, physical education, and technology daily into each class. Adaptive physical education and music are offered for students with special needs. Technology is incorporated into each classroom, supporting the core curriculum. Each student has access to a variety of technology throughout the school day and during extracurricular activities.

The music program encompasses musical concepts, state curriculum standards, as well as focusing on various genres of music, performance etiquette, and exploration of instruments. The students learn how to dictate and perform basic music theory. Students are taught to sing by using the music education method known as Solfege and aural skills. At Indian Riffle Elementary, students in grades 3-5 have the opportunity to participate in a voluntary, extracurricular choir that meets once per week. This performance choir consisting of approximately 100 students has four or more appearances in the community per school year. Several times per year, our general music classes perform for our school and families. One of our most anticipated musical events is the annual Veteran's Day program during which we acknowledge our community veterans.

The main goal of physical education at Indian Riffle Elementary is to provide a safe, enjoyable way for students to recognize the life-long importance of physical activity. Physical education classes provide students with a multitude of life skills along with the integration of core-curriculum. Physical education activities align with the national and state standards and include sports skills, socialization skills, and fitness components. To expose our fourth-grade students to an organized sport, they attend a Division I basketball game where students are provided with an interactive experience incorporating grade level math problems throughout the game. Our physical education program strives to create a love for fitness, cooperation, and social experience.

The Visual Arts program is designed to follow the state and national visual arts standards, allowing students to build on their art knowledge each year while growing creatively. Art lessons include opportunities for students to explore various artists, cultures, art forms, and styles focusing not only on producing art but also on art history, aesthetics, and self-reflection. Art lessons support core curriculum by incorporating and reinforcing math, science, and social studies concepts along with the elements of art and principles of design. Recognition of students' artistic achievement is important to our school's environment and is supported by our annual school and district art exhibitions as well as our student art gallery, prominently featured in our main lobby.

Indian Riffle Elementary is technology-driven. Within every classroom, technology is incorporated on a daily basis. Preschool students have access to multiple student desktop computers. The students use them for academic games, hand-eye coordination, fine motor skills, and basic math and reading concepts.

Kindergarten and first-grade students use Asus tablets while second through fifth grade students are issued Chromebooks at a one-to-one student/device ratio. These tablets and laptops are used to enhance all core subjects using programs like Digital ReadWorks, Edcite, Front Row, Flocabulary, Mobymax, Learning A to Z, and ST Math. Technology is also being utilized for state testing and academic skills screening. Each classroom is equipped with an interactive board, and all teachers have access to multiple Polycoms for small group and whole-class instruction. Our media center provides a diverse learning environment with technology and an extensive library collection to enhance literacy.

While each class functions as a separate entity, we strive to provide our students with diverse cross-curricular experiences. This is accomplished through planning activities with an emphasis on history, cultural diversity, and current events. Specifically, during the 2016-2017 school year, our third-grade students participated in a living murals production. This project included art and music history, movement, and theatre skills. Most recently, the students participated in a Winter Olympic-themed co-curricular activity in grades K-5. Our special areas staff each bring his or her own expertise as they collaborate to enrich each student's experience.

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

High expectations begin in the classroom for all students. Indian Riffle Elementary continues to display academic success through meeting the diverse and individual needs of students. A variety of assessments, instructional approaches, methods, and interventions are used to achieve instructional goals. In the core curriculum, teachers begin with direct, explicit, large group instruction on specific concepts in all content areas. Based on observations and formative assessments students are put into flexible groups to practice concepts. Concepts are reassessed to determine movement to an independent level of practice or for additional one-on-one practice with the teacher. A summative assessment is administered followed by reteaching or extension opportunities.

Teachers are trained to use a multi-tier approach called Response to Intervention (RtI) to provide high-quality instruction and universal screening of all students. A strength at Indian Riffle Elementary is the implementation of a daily one-hour period of intensified instruction for all students in grades one through five. Our half-day kindergarten program includes a 30-minute intervention period with an opportunity to participate in an extended day program called Kids Club. By utilizing this blocked schedule approach, students are never pulled from the classroom during core-curriculum instruction. This instructional period allows us to meet the needs of our students with efficacy and fidelity.

Assessments and data drive instruction at Indian Riffle Elementary. Three times a year we administer AIMSweb, a universal screener, to students in kindergarten through fifth grade as well as district-provided assessments such as iReady for reading and Tenmarks for math. Teachers also use the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA), Fry High-Frequency word list, and teacher-created curriculum-based assessments. Documentation of each student's progress is discussed to determine the effectiveness of targeted skills in intervention through our bi-monthly collaborative grade level data meetings. These meetings include grade level teachers, intervention specialists, principal, and title one support staff.

Within the RtI model, in addition to our core curriculum, Tier I provides differentiated instruction matched to student needs. Using intensified instruction, teachers target students who are performing above and below the benchmark. Classroom intervention and enrichment may include guided reading or math, small group instruction, leveled technology, inquiry, and project-based learning. Based on progress monitoring and assessment, data teams may determine that a student needs more intensive interventions, which moves the student into Tier II.

Tier II provides small group instruction (1:5 ratio) thirty minutes daily, five days per week, through research-based programs. These interventions may include FUNdations Double Dose, ReadLive, Digital ReadWorks, Foundations, Paths to Achieving Literacy Success (PALS), Six-Minute Solution, Learning A to Z, and Speech and Language interventions. The purpose of Tier II is to close achievement gaps and the intensity of instruction matches the student's need. When continued progress monitoring identifies the need for individualized and more intensive intervention, the data team may determine Tier III is appropriate for a

student.

Tier III provides small group instruction (1:3 ratio) one-hour daily, five days per week, through the research-based programs mentioned above during our scheduled intervention period. This extended amount of time continues to provide specialized targeted instruction, supporting a student in achieving their academic goals. Students who do not make sufficient academic progress through the RTI model may be referred for further evaluation to determine the need for further interventions.

Students who are identified as gifted in fourth and fifth grades have the opportunity to participate in a full day program called Kettering Advanced Research and Enrichment (KARE) one day per week. In this program, students work on extending thinking skills that include fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality while applying them to research projects. Third through fifth grade students who are identified gifted in Math or Reading, meet with the gifted teacher once per week during the intervention period to enrich their core curriculum. Third-grade teachers apply their professional development in the area of gifted education to differentiate within the classroom in order to meet the needs of the gifted students. This professional development will extend to fourth and fifth grade teachers in the coming years.

Through our intervention period, we address specific needs to ensure at least a year's worth of growth for each student. The implementation of these expectations at Indian Riffle Elementary consistently maintains students' high levels of achievement.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Indian Riffle Elementary lives by the proverb, “it takes a village.” Staff and students advocate for a positive culture that meets the needs of our school-wide community. As a culture, we take pride in recognizing all types of successes, which may include a No Tardy Party for being on time to school, a student being praised for showing acts of kindness and printing academic achievements in the community newsletter. Each morning students are warmly welcomed from their arrival in the parking lot to the moment they are personally greeted by their teacher. The principal leads morning announcements over a live video feed to engage students by acknowledging student accomplishments, class achievements, and to reinforce our three character traits--be responsible, be safe, and be respectful. The big idea that encompasses this approach is our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) initiative. Through this effort, students are motivated to earn firebird bucks for demonstrating positive behaviors which are acknowledged during quarterly school-wide celebrations. This motivation translates into a positive learning environment which enhances the opportunity for academic achievement and fosters social and emotional growth. This growth is evident as shown in a survey given to students in grades three through five in 2017. Ninety-seven percent of students indicated that they felt, “my school wants me to do well.” In the same survey, ninety-five percent of the students indicated, “there is an adult in my school who will help me if I need it.”

Our school environment is one where all teachers and staff feel valued. There is no division between teachers and all other staff: we share common goals and values in support of our students. Every job is important in creating a responsible, respectful, and safe environment. Our principal creates a climate where staff feels valued for their individual strengths and ideas. By having an open-door policy, she encourages communication where staff feels comfortable expressing their ideas and concerns. At staff meetings, individuals recognize others through personalized compliments. Hearing such uplifting attributes about coworkers builds strong relationships and connects us to each other. To further build these relationships, organized outings allow staff to bond through activities such as holiday events, seasonal crafting, and team-building. Bonding together inside and outside of school creates a positive rapport among staff which enhances collaboration during the school day. The climate in our “village” is one where students and staff work hard, collaborate to overcome difficulties, and celebrate our successes.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Collaborative learning is the basis for successful families, communities, and schools. We believe that Indian Riffle Elementary is the bridge that brings families and the community together. Embracing the fact that parents are the first educators, we strive to involve them in every aspect of the school environment. Continuous communication is vital to a healthy partnership between the school and our families. In order to reach all families, we use a variety of communication methods, such as an automated telephone communication system, classroom and administrative newsletters, school website, and online grade book. These tools empower all members of the school community to support student learning and promote school involvement.

A highly attended program to involve students and parents is our annual Family STEAM and Literacy Night. Families engage in hands-on science, technology, engineering, art, literacy and math activities. For example, this year the adults and children learned to operate a flight simulator on computers. This event provides strategic resources and extension activities to initiate further learning opportunities and target specific learning outcomes. In addition, Children and Parents Plus School = Success (CAPPSS), is a program that provides free, in-home tutoring to students who score low on the kindergarten entrance test. This program teaches parents how to work with their pre-kindergarten student as they observe a teacher tutoring their child.

Indian Riffle Elementary also embraces parent and community involvement through a multitude of events and programs. The Kettering Backpack Program provides non-perishable food items for students in need to supplement their weekend nutrition. Our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) develops and promotes

fundraising opportunities and organizes our parent volunteer system. Monies from fundraisers are used for school programs, classroom supplies, and the end of the year family picnic. A business partnership with Reynolds and Reynolds provides Ohio Reads-trained volunteers to work with students on literacy skills. Our School Resource Officer (SRO) interacts with students regularly by individually greeting students and leading safety programs.

As part of an educational community outreach, our fifth graders attend the STARBASE, STEM program at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. This national program targets those who are socio-economically disadvantaged, which is a large percentage of our student population. Kettering Parks and Recreation Department sponsors an environmental land lab nature program that students in grades K-5 visit three times per year for experiential learning, environmental education, and living science. These opportunities in and around Kettering, Ohio, allow students unique enrichment for life-skills and career choices.

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

It is our belief that as educators improve, students improve. At Indian Riffle Elementary, ongoing professional development from district initiatives is aligned with high expectations to support academic standards, to increase student achievement, and to generate school improvement. Professional development has included a focus on school and district challenges, such as developing positive behavioral strategies, technology, and academic achievement.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an ongoing professional development approach designed to teach social and emotional expectations in the same manner as any core curriculum subject. Through participation in the district- and building-level training, the staff is learning strategies to positively impact student behavior. Our school-wide PBIS team has created an action plan matrix, which includes clear expectations in target areas, encouraging students to make better behavioral choices. Implementation of PBIS has resulted in a forty-percent decrease in principal referrals and an increase in student morale and motivation. Our ongoing professional development will lead us to the next step in this multi-tiered process.

Technology is critical in the 21st Century classroom. District and building technology specialists provide initial and follow-up training to staff and students. The district provides an annual conference, Kett-Tech, with sessions on a variety of topics including Google Classroom, Edmodo, and apps and websites that utilize 21st Century skills.

Indian Riffle Elementary realizes teachers are the most important factor in student learning. All new teachers are paired with an experienced mentor teacher in their field to develop best practices, to navigate curriculum, and to assimilate school culture. This relationship establishes confidence early on with our least experienced teachers. We have found the mentoring to be positive in that there is no gap between our most experienced and least experienced teachers when it comes to student achievement.

Specialized professional development has enabled teachers to become leaders in the areas of literacy, math, technology, and curriculum for the purpose of providing training and support at the building level. This training is provided with the expectation that teachers will bring back and share their knowledge with other teachers. For example, for the past two years, the math specialists have taken the standardized test scores and evaluated areas of weakness. Using this data, specialists created a list of resources and strategies for teachers to improve methods of teaching. These current techniques have increased student achievement within the classroom and on standardized testing. On the 2017 Ohio Report Card, our school received an A rating in gap-closing, which measures annual objectives in Reading and Math.

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

Our leadership philosophy at Indian Riffle Elementary is a shared vision that inspires a positive school culture of staff, students, and community. This philosophy works to enhance the learning experience of all students in a variety of areas such as policies, resources, programs, and relationships which directly link to the success of the whole child.

The principal has set a tone that promotes leadership among staff at Indian Riffle Elementary. She often asks, “What are you known for?” This question encourages staff to seek out their strengths, become experts, and use that knowledge to guide others creating a professional community. She sets high standards and expectations for staff and students by adhering to those standards herself. Over the past 18 years that she has been the principal of our building, she has created a culture that promotes professionalism, positivity, and a caring and safe environment for students to learn.

Our students’ needs go beyond the end of the school day. As an advocate for students, our school guidance counselor builds relationships between school, home, and community. She is an important part of the educational leadership team and by visiting classrooms several times a year, creates awareness of issues that impact students. The social and emotional well-being of our students is supported by our counselor connecting families to mental health services, feeding families through our weekend backpack program, and ensuring overall that students have a clear path to achievement in the classroom.

The leadership team of technology and curriculum leaders assists teachers with new technology tools, programs, and resources that support instruction. They attend district meetings and communicate information while providing ongoing support at the building level. As this team frequently shares new ideas and supports, teachers are continuously improving their instruction. The quality of teaching in our building is forever evolving. For example, student engagement and background knowledge in vocabulary have increased through the use of Flocabulary, a new online educational resource brought to us by our technology and curriculum leaders.

The Indian Riffle Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) supports programs by volunteering, raising funds, and sponsoring student activities. At the beginning of each year, the PTO provides financial support through a start-up fund for each classroom teacher. Because nutrition is linked to student success in school, on standardized test days, the PTO provides a healthy breakfast for all students to boost concentration and alertness. Our PTO volunteers sponsor an end of the year picnic that brings our families and the community together.

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

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The one practice that has been most instrumental to our success at Indian Riffle Elementary is our commitment to providing intentional interventions for all students. All members of our instructional team collaborate to make data-driven decisions. Plans are formulated during bi-monthly data team meetings and implemented during daily intervention periods for all grades.

Grade level data teams, consisting of classroom teachers, intervention specialists, instructional support staff, and principal, meet twice a month to analyze student data. This data includes past state testing results, benchmark AIMSweb scores from current and previous years, and other research-based assessments. Through this collaboration, we identify the needs of each student, develop goals, and create individual prescriptions for all students to achieve academic success in literacy and mathematics.

These prescriptions are implemented during our daily intervention period. Students in first through fifth grade meet each day for one hour. Our half-day kindergarten students meet thirty minutes three times per week. This period is built into the master schedule so each grade has its own dedicated time. We use the Response to Intervention (RtI) process to place students in groups based on the intensity of needed interventions. These groups focus on reteaching, remediation, or enrichment taught by classroom teachers, instructional support staff, intervention specialists, gifted educators, and speech therapists. Because of this purposeful schedule, students are not leaving core instruction for these research-based interventions. These groups are fluid as a result of ongoing data collection and progress monitoring.

In addition to the intervention hour, many students participate in an Extended Day program. Based on individual student data, teachers invite selected students to stay after school for one hour, two or three days per week, for remediation or enrichment. This allows students to receive additional targeted support outside the school day.

Intentional interventions have led to the consistent success of our students on Ohio standardized testing. For example, at least 88% of fourth-grade students have met or exceeded the state standards in both ELA and Math for the last four years. Despite the rising percentage needed to pass state assessments, from 65% in 2014 to 80% in 2017, students continue to experience success due to data-driven decisions and intensive interventions.

This focus on intentional interventions has changed the way we view student instruction in our building. This mindset is shared by the entire staff. Students do not belong to only one teacher. Our staff uses a collaborative effort to drive student achievement.