

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):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 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	41	35	76
1	40	39	79
2	52	31	83
3	38	36	74
4	30	37	67
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	201	178	379

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 85 % White
 - 10 % 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: 8%

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	13
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	29
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	373
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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

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

Japanese

Igbo

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 35%
Total number students who qualify: 132

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
41 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>3</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:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	17
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	8
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
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 22:1

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Central Elementary is dedicated to providing the best possible curricular and co-curricular opportunities, to challenge all students to reach their highest potential, to enjoy learning and to make positive contributions within their homes and communities.

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

In a small rural village, located halfway between Cleveland and Columbus, nestled among farmland and the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, you will find Central Elementary. It's a unique and special place, where a caring and hard-working school community is dedicated to the success of every student who walks through its doors. The commitment to maximizing each student's academic growth is shown through the school's achievements. Central was previously ranked "Excellent" for 11 consecutive years by the Ohio Department of Education. With the transition to the Ohio State Report Card, we continue to receive the honor of being a "High Performing School."

Lexington Local Schools is located in Lexington, Ohio, in Richland County. In 1839, Lexington was recognized as a village by the federal government. In 1850, the railroad came to Lexington, bringing prosperity and settlers on their way westward. The village is proud of its heritage which was a major thoroughfare for the Underground Railroad. In 1831, Lexington erected its first school house. In that small brick building, one teacher taught all twelve grade levels. Sixty years later, the red brick school was erected, now known as Lexington Jr. High School. In 1954, with a need to expand, community members built Central Elementary at 124 Frederick Street. Today, the entire Lexington School District consists of one high school, one junior high school and three elementary schools. The current population of Central Elementary is 379 K-4 students. We have 25 certified full-time staff members. Our average student to teacher ratio is 22:1.

Lexington is a community of transition. Once a thriving business, General Motors brought much opportunity to our community. The closing of the car manufacturing plant in 2010, was devastating. Many of our families now commute miles from home for employment. Many family incomes in our village and surrounding areas are below national averages. In 2003, 3% of our students were economically disadvantaged; by 2018 that percentage rose to 34.8%. Central Elementary has maintained its academic excellence in the face of these economic challenges by developing supports for our economically disadvantaged students and providing interventions. The student body represents a range of ability levels with programs in place to meet the needs of students at both ends of the spectrum. Central staff is committed to the goal that every student will achieve academic success, and will work closely with parents and family members to realize the goal.

Our Mission Statement at Central is clear. We are dedicated to providing the BEST possible curricular and co-curricular opportunities, to challenge all students to reach their highest potential, to enjoy learning and to make positive contributions within their homes and communities. Our staff collaborates to improve instructional practices, provide daily intervention and small group support, set challenging goals and provide 21st Century skills. A challenging curriculum sets high standards for student achievement and contributes to academic success.

To ensure that all students have the opportunity to be successful academically, the teachers and support staff quickly identify students with special needs, evaluate them and proactively implement interventions. Teachers also provide free tutoring before or after school for any student who needs extra help.

Through academic excellence and a commitment to being kind to others, Central students mature into responsible citizens who make a difference in the world. Social and emotional support for our students comes from creating a community of learners. Once a month, our school celebrates Central Pride. Central Pride is a program created by our principal, that allows our students to collaborate with peers from each grade level and different staff members. During Central Pride, students learn anti-bullying skills, life skills and cooperation in the classroom. We play games such as Kindness Bingo and "Would You Rather..." as well as, read stories such as Enemy Pie and Chrysanthemum. These heartwarming stories are easy to relate to. The characters show how to overcome being bullied or teased. Students, parents and teachers truly feel that they belong to "Central's Family" reinforcing kindness and cooperation in a practical way which students can understand and follow. We take pride in the partnership we have forged with our children's families and our community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Central Elementary develops and maintains an awareness of the needs and expectations of students through the Ohio Learning Standards. These standards have been adopted by our school and were developed to provide clear learning and teaching expectations for students, teachers, and parents. The goal of these standards is to prepare students for their future success in college and career, as well as, to be consistent in student learning throughout the state and our country. These standards emphasize skills like critical thinking and problem solving.

Our K-5 Language Arts Standards are broken down into different areas that include Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. Each area is closely connected. For example, students are expected to write about what they read, as well as, share their findings from a research project which connects the speaking and listening standard. The expectation is that the Language Arts block is a shared responsibility within our school. This means that our students encounter ways to use reading, writing, speaking and listening in all areas of their day, including music class, strings, art and gym class.

Central's daily approach to literacy is multifaceted. To teach literacy in reading, Central implements the Guided Reading literacy framework through Fountas and Pinnell. Students are assigned to small flexible groups for reading instruction based on running records/progress monitoring and DRA2 (Developmental Reading Assessment) results. A nightly take-home bag is sent home with each student that contains a leveled reading book, poem, song or free-choice book. Teachers incorporate Shared Reading instruction, where text conversations are implemented. The students sit "knee-to-knee and eye-to-eye" to discuss the text, reflect, listen and respond to others and maintain conversations about what has been read. Community volunteers, parents and grandparents listen to students read in classrooms many hours each day.

The Writing Block of time is carried out in "writer's workshop" fashion. This block of time begins with a mini-lesson where each teacher explains the skill they want to see their students utilize in their writing. Through modeling, the students become working authors, creating personal narratives, how-to stories, opinion pieces, poetry and more. The teachers model popular framework from teacher-authors such as Lucy Calkins and Katie Wood Ray. There are different stages of the writing process; brainstorming, starting a rough draft, editing, illustrating, conferencing with the teacher, publishing and final draft. Teachers also make time for "Author's Chair" each day.

The Self-Selected Reading Block of time begins with a teacher read-aloud. Central students read from a variety of books and magazines and keep individual books in their own reading tub. While the children are reading, teachers are taking running records, asking questions and encouraging students to use their "Reader Toolkits." This block of time is easy to scaffold. (Scaffolding is breaking up the learning into chunks and then providing a tool, or structure, with each chunk in order to provide support to all levels of readers.)

The fourth block is Working with Words. During this time, children learn to read and spell high-frequency words and learn patterns that help them decode and spell many words. The first ten minutes of this block are for practicing weekly word wall (spelling) words and for reviewing the words that have already been introduced. Students practice new and old words daily by writing, clapping or snapping letters, sorting words, rainbow writing (where students use 3 different colors of crayons and trace each word, making a "rainbow") and more. An in-depth study of letters and sounds through the use of Foundations, rounds out the teaching of phonics.

Go-Math is our newly adopted math program designed to meet the objectives of the Ohio Learning Standards. During our math block of time, students can be found learning as a whole group, practicing skills on the Smartboard, working in pairs or small groups at tables, playing math games with a partner, or practicing math objectives independently for mastery. The emphasis in our math block of time is on depth of instruction and a focused, rigorous curriculum. Each grade-level standard contains a statement of objectives to be developed, mastered and reviewed, as well as, enrichment activities. The high standards

provide our students the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed later in life. Central's math curriculum also encourages students to make sense of problems and to look for ways to solve problems using different pathways. It also encourages students to apply mathematics to everyday life.

Central teachers are aware of the importance of connecting lesson content to real-world experiences and careers for our students. Teachers are committed to helping prepare students for the 21st century by integrating prior knowledge and life experiences that contribute to new learning in the classroom and to help build motivation and interest for a lesson. Teachers also believe a strong vocabulary background is essential before teaching a concept in Science or Social Studies. Our philosophy is that mastery of the instructional text, regardless of the subject, is the foundation for learning.

Central teachers meet with grade level colleagues to discuss science and social studies concepts that can be found in basic themes. These themes are created through the Ohio Content Standards. Our model curriculum includes a topic, content statement, content elaboration and expectations for learning or cognitive demands. Teachers are given instructional strategies, resources and ideas for diverse learners. Classroom portals are used to model classroom methods of teaching science and social studies using inquiry through webcasts, podcasts and video clips. Students acquire foundational skills through programs such as Junior Achievement, field trips to the State Capitol, tours of the Village of Lexington, lessons on budgeting given by volunteers from local businesses and monthly projects.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Central Elementary supports student acquisition of essential skills and knowledge through art, music, physical education, technology, and library session. Students in first through third grade participate in 45-minute art sessions weekly, while fourth grade students attend for 60 minutes weekly. Students in grades Kindergarten through fourth grade participate in 60-minutes of general music and physical education each week. Students also attend 30-minute sessions of library each week.

Central believes that instruction in the Arts is crucial to the development of the “whole” child. Our art program emphasizes art history, visual awareness, a study on different artists. Students and parents observe the artwork that is on display during our Ice Cream Social, then have the option of purchasing their “artist’s” framed work. Artwork is displayed at local businesses and the Lexington Library to bring Youth Art Month to the community. Students’ artwork has been displayed at the State House for the Ohio Alliance of Art Education Art Show. Students can participate in a wide range of activities using a variety of materials and methods.

Art is integrated into subjects including language arts, science, social studies, math and technology. Students draw pictures to compare characters in a story. They work with clay to create a pot or make paper mache necklaces to enhance the social studies curriculum. Our art teacher incorporates the Studio Habits of Mind because she is transitioning to a “teaching for artistic behavior” (TAB) classroom. Forms of art are incorporated within the classroom are weaving, clay printmaking, sewing, drawing, painting, architecture, and sculpture.

The goal for the Central's art curriculum is to create lifelong creative thinkers. Though not all students will be professional artists or work in a creative field, we recognize the need for providing students with an environment to develop ideas and skills, so they have a desire to create as they grow.

Central’s music program is considered an extraordinary endeavor for our students. We believe music enhances many different academic subjects. Students who participate in music classes have improved creativity and confidence. Music instruction helps students develop fluency, rhythm and patterning. Students learn to recognize music from diverse cultures and create music. Students learn that musical elements communicate meaning by singing songs, moving to music and playing instruments. Students use the Smartboard to listen to several types of music and learn to recognize different instruments such as those you would find in an orchestra. Students start to form opinions about music they hear and the roles of a musician and performer.

Students are exposed to the preparations and culmination of a program performance. Each grade level performs for an audience in our auditorium. These performances are chosen carefully to match the skill level of the students and their grade level. One example would be the Veterans' Day Program that is presented each year. Students in third and fourth grade also could participate in a beginner's orchestra program. This would be a precursor to becoming part of the junior high or high school orchestra.

Ohio Physical Education Standards consist of motor skill and movement practice, application of knowledge and concepts, and strategies and tactics related to movement and performance. They also address recognition of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and social interaction.

Students integrate physical education with health and science through learning about the cardiovascular system and the effect exercise has on your heart. Students feel their pulse points and target their own heart rates. Students are taught various games such as dodge ball, volleyball, Frisbee, rope climbing and hula-hoop activities that facilitate cooperation.

Many skills are introduced in the younger grades, then reinforced in the older grades. Manipulatives are used such as beach balls, jump ropes, basketballs, scooters and parachutes, to develop strength, coordination and flexibility. At the end of the year, students are treated to "Field Day." Students implement all the skills they have acquired throughout the year. Many families volunteer their time to oversee stations where students can choose to play water games, ride pedaled dune buggies, throw basketballs into various hoops, participate in sack races and throw water balloons.

Central has computer carts for each grade level and a computer lab. As early as kindergarten, students learn to navigate the computer, mouse and keyboard. Kindergarten students enjoy programs such as Starfall, Storyplace and Learning Planet. Students in the upper grades use Study Island, Raz Kids, Xtra Math, and Moby Max. All students use computers to practice math facts, write a story, present a power point and prepare for state testing.

Central's library consists of titles in a wide range of readability levels. Our librarian promotes reading through "Right to Read" week activities, Scholastic Book Fairs, Read Across America and Dr. Seuss' Birthday. Fun activities take place during these weeks to promote reading and encourage students to keep reading throughout the summer.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Central teachers provide a variety of instructional approaches, use quality interventions and assessments in all subject areas. In grades K-4 lessons are introduced whole class with a review from the day before. Students are then placed in groups where teachers use tiered and individualized instruction. In math, students take a preassessment at the beginning of each chapter. Teachers use that information to form leveled groups which may change as needed. During these groups students receive direct instruction on specific skills needed for the lesson. In ELA (English Language Arts), teachers use the DRA2 and progress monitoring to assess students' independent reading levels. Results are used to create flex groups within the classroom, as well as, to qualify students for Title One and Power Reading. During Guided Reading each day, students are called up to the reading table for explicit teaching at their instructional level. Teachers help students with word work, where students memorize sight words, look for phonics patterns and practice word attack strategies in alignment with CAFE strategies and Daily Five. The CAFÉ menu breaks each component – comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and expanding vocabulary – into significant strategies that support each goal. Posted on the classroom wall and built throughout the year, it serves as a visual reminder of whole-class instruction as well as individual goals.

Central teachers provide a structure for conferring, organize assessment data, maximize time with students in their small group, engage students and help them to be accountable for their learning. The Daily Five gives students the opportunity to select from authentic reading and writing choices, while their teacher meets the needs individually and through small group instruction. In our first grade classrooms, you would see a small group of students working with the teacher at the reading table on various skills, while three students are writing a story at the writing table, three students are at a listening center, four students partner reading,

and four students working on spelling patterns with letter tiles, while two students “write around the room”.

Technology strongly supports our math and ELA program through reteach, practice and homework assignments. In math, modules and assessments done both at home and at school, provide teachers with a percentage of skills mastered. This information guides the mini lessons, reteach lessons and enrichment lessons for the following day. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) also plays a large part in our problem-based learning and allows for cross-curricular connections. Teachers supply students with informational science passages and websites which build a basis of understanding in the science content area. The students are given a challenge to complete which requires some knowledge and application of the science and math content previously learned. Students begin with their own sketch and design plan. Group members then meet and decide on the best plan. Students work together in small groups to communicate, plan, design, build, and test. The groups typically have a limited supply of resources and time. When time is up, the design is tested, results are discussed, changes are planned, and modifications are made. Working together in small groups and having group discussions is a powerful component to our problem-based learning.

Central teachers use assessment results to challenge students independently, and to meet the needs of students working above grade level. Those students participate in book studies, reading response journals, Jacob’s Ladder, and extended comprehension activities. Students identified by the Terra Nova as Talented and Gifted are grouped with other identified students from the same grade to participate in accelerated activities.

Many instructional approaches, daily interventions, and quality assessments are used daily to meet the needs of all students. Teachers frequently monitor student learning to improve instructional programs. To continue the “excellence”, Central teachers work together to make sure all students are valued and to create consistency through grade levels. The school year is started by writing SLOs (Student Learning Objectives) for each student. Teachers decide what preassessments and post assessments are given (with the help of an approved list by ODE). After giving the preassessments, teachers create student learning objectives. The data identifies student’s strengths and weaknesses. Trend data is used to create an objective and to determine the amount of growth needed. Teachers and students work toward the objective using summative and formative assessments. The targets for each student are rigorous, yet developmentally appropriate. Central teachers maintain high standards by collaborating with each other and parents. We have a strong administration who supports, listens to concerns and who are always willing to help teachers form solutions to problems. Teachers attend professional development opportunities such as; Gifted and Talented training, Literacy Collaborative Workshops, and In-School Leadership training, to stay current in curriculum and instructional methods. Through collaboration with all staff members, we create a supportive learning environment that maintains an elevated level of achievement.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The staff, parents and community of Central Elementary are dedicated to creating and maintaining an environment where all students feel that they are a valued part of our school. Keeping students positively engaged and motivated is key to maintaining academic, social and emotional success. We pride ourselves on one comment we often hear, "Central has such a friendly, positive atmosphere." This ethos permeates all areas of our school. Central is honored with the involvement and support of local families, community members, and a dedicated staff who assist during and outside of school hours to improve social skills, all academic abilities and different learning styles. Central also has many supports in place for students who are struggling academically, socially, or emotionally. This ensures our students will be prepared to be leaders in today's and tomorrow's society.

Our school's positive environment, with its focus on individual worth, is evident in our activities. Eight times a year, all students and staff members participate in "Central Pride Days." The students are divided up into multi-grade groups to work on 30 minute team building activities facilitated by staff that promote anti-bullying, communication, cooperation and increased sense of community. Each grade level participates in an annual performance or musical for the whole school during the day and then for the community at night. Our school also has many school-wide celebrations, including School Spirit Days, Right to Read Week, Dr. Seuss Week, Kindness Month and Fun Day. During these occasions, students are rewarded with fun activities that also promote academic growth in a positive environment.

Further academic motivation and growth are facilitated with numerous volunteers and regular events. The Reading Carnival is a monthly event sponsored by our PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) to keep the students excited and motivated to read and write. Students earn tickets each month by completing reading and writing assignments. They are able to spend these tickets eight times a year on games, food and activities. The PTO organizes the games, prizes and volunteers. Each week, 5-7 students are chosen for their exceptional writing. Their pictures are displayed in the Writer's Gallery in the school showcase. Winning students receive a "Golden Pencil" and a McDonald's gift certificate, as well as, recognition on Facebook and in the weekly newsletter. Academically, we have volunteers who assist the students with extra time and help. Every morning, before school, a staff member manages the "Homework Table" where any student can go for assistance. Our fourth grade Academic Challenge Team shows off their knowledge and hard work at our local competition that includes teams from five counties.

Social and emotional growth is a priority at Central Elementary. Students are given opportunities to develop leadership in many different ways. The most obvious is from students teaching other students. Various classes interact, allowing students to teach one another or listen to one another read. Central's Leadership Team consists of a boy and a girl nominated from each fourth grade classroom each quarter. They meet weekly, over lunch, to develop leadership skills and plan activities to promote community. Our most popular volunteers are the four Therapy Dogs that come in weekly to spend time with our students. Social and emotional growth is further developed through whole class lessons, small groups, and individual sessions facilitated by our school counselor.

Staff input to the operation of the school and the decision making process is highly valued at Central. Monthly meetings with a representative from each grade level and non-certified staff meet once a month with the principal. During these meetings, staff members give their input regarding curricular decisions, current events, building practices, procedures and any other concerns or suggestions they might have. This provides a great forum for authentic communication.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

The largest components to Central's success are strong families and community. Many families move to the Lexington School District because of its historically rich tradition of high standards in academics, fine arts and athletics. All grade levels work together to teach the students the importance of community.

In the fall, the students in every art class decorate brown paper bags with "Lexington Spirit" messages. These bags are distributed to local vendors to use when bagging their products that will be dispersed to community members. The same activity is repeated in February for "Kindness Month." Food is always a popular way of showing our appreciation! In the fall, fourth graders write letters of appreciation and deliver student made lunches to local firefighters, police and state highway patrol troopers in remembrance of 9/11. Annually, Central staff prepares a breakfast buffet to show appreciation for all of the volunteers that help throughout the school year.

Since our school is located near the high school and junior high school, we benefit from extra support given by students and the many clubs. Each day, students walk from the junior high school after their dismissal, to help students and teachers in a variety of ways. They listen to students read, help reteach a math skill, grade papers, cut, staple, organize papers and much more. Annually, the Leo Club puts on a play about bullying. At Christmas time, the Jazz Band or Fire and Ice Choir perform for our school. In February, the students invite our school districts' maintenance and technology department personnel, bus drivers, local firefighters and police officers for an appreciation breakfast. The students write the invitations, prepare the meal and serve the community workers.

Once a week, "Reading Buddies" come to the school to read with students. A "Reading Buddy" is a community member, often a retired teacher, grandparent or church member. Our volunteer hours consistently create the equivalent of having three extra staff members at school each day, for a total of approximately 3,780 hours a year.

Staff members donate to the Denim Day Fund on Fridays when jeans are permissible. The money is utilized to purchase cards or gifts for students, parents or community members who have suffered an extended illness, devastating loss or event. At the end of the year, the money that remains is donated to a community organization that supports our students (The Store, Raemelton Therapeutic Equestrian Center, etc...).

Central students and families participated in "Send Your Parent to School Night" where parents attend sessions to help their students with the new Ohio State Tests, ideas to cope with forms of test anxiety and curriculum question/answer sessions.

For the past 17 years, Central has had a "Safety Day" where the students learn safety from the experts. Most years, Akron Children's Hospital's helicopter "Air Bear" comes, as well as, SWAT members, Hostage Negotiations, Lexington Police, State Highway Patrol, Troy Township Fire Department/Emergency, Ohio State Parks and the local Air National Guard. During this event, we welcome parents and siblings to participate in activities.

During the Christmas season, Central staff orchestrates a "Giving Tree" in which we adopt families from our school community and collect presents and gift cards. We receive community support to help us with this endeavor, including local churches and the Builder's Association. This year, we were able to help sixteen students. Several local churches team up to help our economically disadvantaged students by providing food bags which are sent home every weekend during the school year.

Every year, in the fall, we have "Parent Lunch" week. The students invite their parents and grandparents to have lunch with them. Even though we have a designated week for open lunches, we encourage families to visit their students during lunch anytime of the year. Our best attended event is always the Ice Cream Social, where families come to eat ice cream, participate in literacy activities, such as a scavenger hunt, sponsored by our Title One teacher, peruse the art show and shop at the book fair. Teachers prepare a variety of games and learning materials to show what our students are learning and how to prepare for the standardized tests. When families gather in the art room, they create clay projects together.

Central offers many activities that engage local families and partners. We reap the benefits from having such a supportive community!

3. Professional Development:

Professional development for teachers at Central, is driven by the collection and analysis of multiple points of data. We believe this allows us to research and design a professional development plan that will improve our instructional methods and meet the needs of our students.

At the district level, teachers are given three in-service days a year to meet as grade-level teams with teachers from other buildings. These days are a combination of professional development and collaboration. During these professional development days, teachers also review and revise district designed curriculum maps. The teachers at Central have weekly common planning times to meet and organize their curriculum, instruction and assessments. The main purpose of this time is to ensure curricular consistency at each grade level. The time the teachers spend together strengthens our school academically, but more importantly, it cultivates new discussion on how to meet the needs of our students in all areas of life. During these conversations, teachers pinpoint areas of need and design what professional development is needed. For example, during a recent discussion, we addressed our increasing concerns of children born addicted to drugs and how it impacts their needs in the classroom. As a result, our Occupational Therapist provided an in-service on Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome to help us address the needs of these students and their parents. Social and emotional professional development opportunities are regularly offered to address the ongoing needs of students. Recent trainings have involved topics of anxiety, sensory awareness, bullying and depression.

Every year when the state tests are available, we scrutinize our scores for strengths, weaknesses, subgroup performance and trends. Each teacher analyzes her own class, in the context of historical data. As grade levels, we also discuss our scores in general and then determine the path for instruction and professional development to be implemented to allow for the best and most effective outcome. With Ohio's implementation of the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, a passing score for the student is required for promotion, which is why we focus professional development on our reading and writing instruction. As a result, teams of teachers across the district attended training in Balanced Literacy, which is a multifaceted approach that focuses on language/word study, reading and writing workshops. Teachers then created goals for their students and developed plans to adapt their instruction as a result of that professional development.

Central's professional development goal is to help our students grow academically, as well as, socially and emotionally. We believe all of these are important factors that impact our students' academic success.

4. School Leadership:

All of the staff members at Central are in a leadership role in some capacity throughout the school day. This is a direct reflection of the atmosphere and respect that is expected in our school environment. The Faculty Advisory Committee meets once a month. This committee consists of representation from each grade level, special education, special teachers and support staff. The directive of this council is to discuss building initiatives, policies, classroom instructional needs and achievement. Each representative shares feedback with the members of their respective group, then notes are shared with all of the staff members.

The principal's main role as lead administrator is to ensure that all staff, students and parents are working together to provide the best possible curricular and co-curricular opportunities to challenge all students to reach their highest potential, to enjoy learning and to make positive contributions within their homes and communities. While the primary focus is to ensure that our students receive the best academic opportunities possible, she also orchestrates the personnel schedule, reviews academic data, stays atop of current trends, ensures safety and creates a climate of cooperation and collaboration. Our principal commits to grading one stack of papers from each classroom every week. Besides coordinating all of the meetings and logistics of running the school, the principal will express that the most effective thing that she does is to grade a stack of papers from each classroom every week. This enables her to keep track of the curriculum and how each student is performing academically.

The teaching staff work as a team to optimize resources and to create a positive environment. The teacher

teams meet weekly to review areas of need and adjust instruction accordingly. This collaboration process has been a key component in our outstanding results in testing and closing the gap, tracking our subgroups and student achievement.

The staff at Central share in the responsibility of encouraging parents and families to be actively involved with the education process of our students. This provides all stakeholders an opportunity to collaborate in our school environment. Our strong leadership is a primary driver of our academic excellence. Central has successful leadership in a variety of ways. One way is instructional leadership. This is where we focus on improving classroom practices. Central teachers gather with district administrators twice a year to make changes to curriculum, discuss the latest test results and how we can continually improve student mastery. Teachers are also given new programs to incorporate into their daily teaching. Our principal shares her vision and goals at the beginning of each year, then provides clear objectives that demonstrate how the goals can be achieved. Our principal is an effective communicator and has high expectations for her staff. The connection between leadership decisions and student learning is demonstrated by our school leadership team. Students learn to be good citizens and show kindness through the Kindness Project. Central students provide breakfast for community members to thank them for their service and create notes and pack brown sack lunches in remembrance of 9/11 for first responders. With a strong leadership philosophy, Central staff continues to create an environment that focuses on student achievement.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Central Elementary has a variety of practices that contribute to student success. While the combination of these practices aide in student achievement, the one component that holds it all together is the quality partnership our staff members have with each other and our student's families. Central Elementary and family members work hand in hand to provide support for each student in order to achieve academic, social, and emotional success.

Our teachers work closely with students and their families to acquire background knowledge on each student to develop a better understanding of where they are emotionally, socially and academically. This information helps teachers tailor lessons that meet the needs of all types of learners. Our parents volunteer weekly in our classrooms by giving students academic instruction, as well as, helping to organize school activities. Parents are consistently helping remediate or challenge students in our classrooms. In turn, students benefit from a lesson that meets them where they are, academically, with social and emotional assistance along the way.

Central has a support staff that is instrumental in maintaining academic momentum. They travel throughout our building each day entering classrooms and delivering support to students at both ends of the learning spectrum. Through years of ongoing communication, mutual respect and consistent reflection, Central teachers and support staff have developed a "well-oiled machine" where educational aides can enter a classroom and intuitively seek out students who need backing, which enables us, as a team, to help every student reach academic success.

Our district provides our staff with professional days where teachers within the same grade level, across the district, are able to meet and make certain that our curriculum is aligned. As a staff, we have thorough discussions about vocabulary being used when teaching at each grade level. Taking the time to review vocabulary across the curriculum and grade levels, ensures that our students consistently hear the same vocabulary, develop a strong understanding of it and transition to more difficult language as they progress through the grades. Our staff researches and uses best practices including small group learning, STEM, incorporating mentor texts and guided reading and writing.

This focus on professional partnership has led our students to achieve high test scores on state tests year after year. Our state report card indicates such consistency in the Gap Closing category. Central has achieved an "A" in this every year since the 2013-2014 school year. Central Elementary staff will continue to provide the best for our students and their families by carrying on this collaboration with each other in an effort to drive each student to success.