

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 11 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 16 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	21	12	33
K	24	21	45
1	18	27	45
2	27	28	55
3	26	25	51
4	22	28	50
5	36	19	55
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	174	160	334

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 11 % Black or African American
 - 11 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 66 % 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: 15%

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	29
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	13
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	42
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	280
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
10 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 59 %
Total number students who qualify: 197

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
48 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>7</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>17</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>6</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: 2
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	11
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
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 25:1

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	94%	93%	95%	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.

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.

Robert Morris Elementary in partnership with staff, students, parents, and community will provide a nurturing environment committed to providing academic excellence and personal, social, and physical growth of all students.

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

The Robert Morris Elementary Family encompasses a partnership of students, staff, parents, and the community working together. Our goal is to provide a nurturing, challenging and safe school environment where children can flourish and grow to meet their full potential. We are dedicated to guiding all of the students toward achieving individual success, appreciating human value and becoming lifelong learners. The staff sets goals and expectations that exceed the Common Core standards set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Maintaining and achieving these goals, and the goals of each individual child, is our main commitment.

The school was named for Robert Morris, Jr., a Founding Father of the United States. He was born in England on January 20, 1734. Morris migrated to the United States as a teenager and went on to become a successful businessman. He oversaw the striking of the first coins in the United States and signed the Declaration of Independence. He is widely regarded as one of the founders of the financial system in our country, along with Alexander Hamilton and Albert Gallatin.

Robert Morris Elementary School was built in 1895 at the corner of Boulevard Avenue and Columbia Street in the Green Ridge section of Scranton, Pennsylvania. An annex was added to the main building in 1926. In 1965, Robert Morris underwent complete modernization as part of the Scranton School District's multi-million dollar improvement program. The original structure from 1895 was demolished, the annex was renovated, and a beautiful modern school was built in its place with nineteen classrooms housing grades kindergarten through grade six, a library, music and art rooms along with a huge play area for the students.

Currently, Robert Morris provides educational services to children from preschool through grade five. In addition to the support of the regular education teachers, various services are provided by the Scranton School District. Multiple academic needs can be met through the support of teachers and staff from Title I Reading and Math, English Language Learners, School Psychologists, Learning Support, Autistic Support, Life Skills Support and Gifted Support. Additionally, emotional support is offered to our students through intensive case management with our Student Based Behavioral Health Program (SBBH) in conjunction with the Scranton Counseling Center. This SBBH program provides a therapeutic support for students in need. Health and wellness needs are provided by the school nurse, the district's physician and dental program. Speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy are offered to those qualifying students. A School Wide Positive Behavior Support Program (SWPBS) is utilized throughout the school, which fosters students' self esteem and a sense of being part of the Robert Morris Community. A team of talented specialty teachers enrich the students by exposing and providing outlets for creativity in music, art, literature and movement.

The demographics of Robert Morris Elementary have changed in conjunction with the changing economic climate of the country. Parents are hard working, supportive and involved in their children's education. We have an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that is constantly working on innovative ideas to make the educational experience memorable and fun for the students. The PTA also provides the funding for enhanced community experiences. They recognize that each child at Robert Morris Elementary is a valuable individual and an integral part of the school community. The Green Ridge section of Scranton is a close-knit community with Robert Morris Elementary being its neighborhood school, and most students live within walking distance. The businesses are in close proximity to the school forming an extended community relationship allowing staff, parents and students to frequent them, and in turn, the businesses have partnered with Robert Morris Elementary for various events including the Halloween Parade, Christmas tree decorating and sponsoring fundraisers.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Robert Morris Elementary implements the Pennsylvania Common Core State Standards in all subject areas ensuring that students are ready for success in higher education. We have created a strong curriculum that works within the standards to meet individual student needs and learning styles to reach maximum potential for all.

Within the last few years our school, along with the Scranton City School District as a whole, restructured our standards. To support these changes, we purchased new, rigorous, research-based materials to support the curricula in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. These new materials best fit the learning styles of our Robert Morris Elementary population. Science and Social Studies are taught either as stand-alone classes or are integrated into ELA and Mathematics classes. This provides our students the foundations needed for success in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM), as well as delivering the fundamentals in history, geography and citizenship.

In our English Language Arts curriculum, teachers guide students along to develop them into critical readers and proficient writers through student-centered instruction and interdisciplinary themes. Teachers also focus on the progressive development of reading comprehension so that students can utilize strategies effectively throughout their educational careers. Through reading a diverse array of texts, and in a range of subjects, students are expected to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspective. Teachers target individual student needs that are identified through standards and delivered through program elements which include: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, text dependent analysis, comprehension skills, and fluency. All students in grades Preschool through fifth grade receive instruction in ELA that follow the same scope and sequence. Through the use of a spiraled curriculum, concepts are reviewed and then expanded upon from year to year.

Robert Morris Elementary has developed a strong Mathematics curriculum that, much like our ELA curriculum, is based on identifying individual student needs. Teacher guidance of student discovery through hands on problem solving connects math to common situations encountered outside the classroom. The curriculum is geared to promote creativity and use of manipulatives encouraging students to become flexible thinkers within the following broad categories: Numbers and Operations in both Base-Ten and Fractions, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Geometry, Measurement, Data Analysis and Probability, and Mathematical Practices.

These components of our elementary Mathematics program develop student understanding of basic skills and fundamental algorithms. Our Mathematics program encourages students to work cooperatively, communicate mathematically, and make connections between important mathematical topics and the real world. All Robert Morris Elementary students receive instruction in Mathematics through a spiraled approach in which mastery is gained over time rather than during a few teacher-centric lessons.

In the early primary grades, Science curriculum is presented through thematic instruction, thus allowing students to experience the science curriculum within both ELA and Mathematics. In the later elementary grades, the Science curriculum is a core class. The standards based curriculum has been developed to be both hands-on and to be the building blocks to future STEAM instruction. The curriculum encourages students to apply their knowledge and test theories, individually or cooperatively, through experimentation. Science content in kindergarten through second grade is driven through the ELA curriculum. Students experience planting and germination of seeds when they read stories based on those topics. Life cycles of animals and roles/occupations people take within different regions and cultures across the country are also covered. Third through fifth graders develop their inquiry based skills, constructing explanations and analyzing and interpreting data. They learn to use these skills to identify if things are living or nonliving as well as how they interact with each other.

Much like the Science curriculum, early primary Social Studies curriculum is taught thematically. The goal

of our curriculum is to assure students are exposed to social studies, history, and government through role play and immersive experiences throughout the community. In Social Studies, for kindergarten through second grade, the focus is on understanding of what communities are and the roles people have within them. By third grade students grow their understanding and learn how people immigrated to settle into their communities, how the communities create a government to run the community, as well as how people make economic choices. Fourth grade places specific emphasis on Pennsylvania and its government. They discuss the role of each part of government and how they interact with other governments (national and local) and how they provide services for its people. Fifth graders take their knowledge from fourth grade and apply it to all of the United States. Emphasis is placed on how culture and geography plays an impact in different regions of the country. Emphasis is put onto being proactive citizens at every level. The later elementary grades have the same point of emphasis. The curriculum teaches proactive citizenry through an understanding of how diversity, overcoming adversity, and cooperation are essential traits of both Americans and Pennsylvanians.

For four-year old children in Preschool, we use a combination of two research based, accredited programs. The comprehensive literacy curriculum helps early learners develop the strong foundation they will need for reading and writing success. These units integrate math, science, and social-emotional development throughout the lessons, while encouraging the development of oral language and listening skills needed for future learning. Results of the standards and curriculum have shown that preschoolers build the alphabetic knowledge, phonological and phonemic awareness, and vocabulary development needed for school advancement.

In our Math curriculum, students work their way through activities to develop skills in counting, number concepts, measurement, graphing, and patterning. By exposing our children to this program in Preschool, we are giving them the basic pre-math skills that they will need to succeed in Kindergarten.

In Preschool, we also focus heavily on developing the social-emotional skills needed to succeed in school. Children are guided in developing their self-help skills, building independence, encouraging self-confidence, and learning when and how to ask for help when needed.

Robert Morris Elementary, and in fact the Scranton City School District as a whole, is an economically disadvantaged community. Both scientific research and anecdotal evidence seen within our building shows that students who have not been exposed to the skills presented through our Preschool curriculum, have gaps in Kindergarten preparedness. These gaps can often lead to further underachievement as a student progresses through elementary school and beyond. Therefore, Robert Morris Elementary Preschool program provides the impact necessary to ensure school readiness.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Robert Morris Elementary offers related arts programs throughout the school day to our student population, which includes Art, Music, Physical Education, and Library. The teachers of these programs work collaboratively with the regular education teachers to supplement learning that takes place in our school. Advanced skills such as critical thinking, fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, speech development, synthesizing, analyzing, and critiquing information occur regularly in these related art courses to increase student achievement. Students receive each related arts course forty minutes weekly.

All students receive music education. In this course, students respond to music through movement, sing songs across all cultures and genres, analyze music, learn how to play instruments, and notate music. Chorus and orchestra are offered to students in the fourth and fifth grades. These students perform at various venues throughout the community to showcase their talents. Much of the early primary grades' music program incorporates songs and movements to introduce and develop musical elements. The later elementary music program allows students to advance learning about music concepts and apply the music skills on instruments.

The Library curriculum at Robert Morris Elementary provides students with a strong base in literature and literacy concepts while supporting classroom ELA, Science and Social Studies objectives. Administered by

an American Library Association-accredited librarian, the library program offers units on research skills, book care, library citizenship, literary elements, fiction and nonfiction genres, and PSSA preparation, all while encouraging critical thinking skills and literary analysis. Students are provided the opportunity to enjoy reading, hearing, and selecting award-winning literature. Students also learn valuable literacy skills and background information on a variety of topics. The librarian reads stories and books each week to younger students in a comfortable setting with plenty of questions and answers to foster literary discussions.

Robert Morris Elementary follows a Discipline Based Art Education program that is aligned with the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards. Standards from core subjects, such as Math and ELA, are integrated into various lessons. The Art curriculum has students understanding the following concepts: the use of art tools, safety procedures, basic art vocabulary from the elements and principles of art, express ideas independently, recognize and use all stages of the creative process, and gain an understanding and awareness of the role of art throughout history and across cultures. Finally, students develop and experience joy through creative expression.

Our Physical Education program teaches our students about health and wellness which includes nutritional information and exercise. Students engage in cross-curricular activities based on classroom objectives, health lessons relating to a well-balanced diet, develop fine and gross motor skills, and integration of technology. Students experience activities that model teamwork, positive social interactions, and responsibility. All activities are age appropriate to target developmental levels through the use of various skills. Our Physical Education promotes lifelong skills for participation in recreational activities, cooperative games and a healthy lifestyle to our students.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Teachers employ a variety of auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile strategies to address the preferred learning modalities of individual students. They include graphic organizers, role play, oral and visual presentations, questioning, lecture, hands on experimentation followed by debriefing, use of audio visual equipment, and field trips.

Daily learning objectives are communicated to the students allowing them to take ownership and control of their learning. Clear expectations are essential to effective teaching and student learning. Teachers focus on critical thinking and reasoning as well as informational literacy by using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) leveled questioning. The different level questioning is used to deliver the same curriculum to different level learners. For example, a level four question would be used for a more advanced student, allowing them to use strategic thinking and extend to critiquing and analyzing content. Our teachers recognize the enormous diversity that exists among students, plan appropriate instruction for a wide range of individual differences in the classroom, and believe, that all students can and will be successful in learning. Tiered instructional processes are used to deliver content to students on different academic levels to promote understanding based on their specific needs. We do this through core curriculum materials, which are aligned to state standards. This differentiated instruction allows each student to show growth regardless of their academic level. Teachers employ hands on, active learning in our Math and Science curriculum to enhance critical thinking skills to stimulate the students' natural curiosity about themselves and their environment. These investigative activities and open-ended questioning allow this type of learning to occur daily. Students work both independently and cooperatively on projects that require application of problem solving and higher order thinking. Teachers include technology when presenting their daily lessons. The programs used to deliver our curriculum all provide web-based supports and enrichment activities. Every classroom in the building is equipped with a Promethean Board which enhances instructional delivery. The faculty at Robert Morris Elementary employs assessment data to understand and improve student and school performance in numerous ways to guide instruction. Informal assessment occurs daily which allows teachers to know where students are performing and provides clear guidelines for additional instruction of the curriculum. For example, the Everyday Math Program has an opportunity for informal assessment in every lesson. Formal assessments like projects, essays, and exams are also used to track individual student performance and drive instruction. The above assessment results allow teachers to group the students accordingly to provide differentiated instruction. Some differentiated instructional methods we use are:

tutoring, manipulatives, extended time, and adaptive materials. Our teachers set clear guidelines for independent work to match individual needs. Teachers divide their time, resources, and efforts to effectively reach students with different backgrounds, skill levels, interests, and readiness to learn.

It is our belief that understanding our students will produce better educational outcomes. Professional collaboration allows teachers to provide information about students' strengths and areas of concern as they progress throughout their academic careers. Knowing our students' backgrounds, home lives, interests, and socioeconomic status allow us plan meaningful and effective instruction. Our plan includes measurable achievement goals and an action plan for their implementation and evaluation.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Robert Morris Elementary is a small community school, which is a piece of a much larger puzzle, the Scranton City School District. Although we work together and collaborate with all of our city schools, Robert Morris Elementary is known for its home-school connections, working together with teachers, staff and families to create and foster a positive learning environment. Our school is in constant communication with our students' families, utilizing not only traditional methods such as school calendars, parent-teacher meetings and phone calls, but also our school's website, Twitter, PTA Facebook and the Remind application. Making connections between a student's family and school environment is a top priority for supporting his or her academic, social and emotional growth.

In addition to family connections, Robert Morris Elementary utilizes a School-Wide Positive Behavior Program (SWPBP). Each child's behavior is recorded daily either through charting or in the individual student's planner to facilitate home-school connections. All students in our school attend assemblies together to learn about school rules, expectations, and rewards. Students are rewarded with Robert Morris Elementary Rockstar tickets, which all staff in the building distributes for positive behaviors. Rockstar tickets are then put into a drawing to win weekly prizes, which encourages students to follow procedures, and exhibit positive behaviors to earn more tickets. Each classroom has a Rockstar behavior chart. Each chart contains five color codes indicating level of student behavior that provides a visual to monitor and self correct their behaviors throughout the day. Positive behavior is rewarded weekly through Rockstar ticket drawings and school wide Fun Friday classroom activities as well as monthly rewards. All rewards are geared to be fun and social activities that motivate students to do their best.

In conjunction with our school's behavior program, we are fortunate to have a School Based Behavioral Health (SBBH) team, through Scranton Counseling Center. SBBH is a strengths-based program which offers family sessions, individual and group counseling. Our teachers also benefit from this program by learning new intervention strategies and receiving additional classroom support. Furthering the home-school connection our PTA adds to our positive environment by planning after school activities such as school dances, Field Day and the Fifth Grade vs. Teachers Kickball Game. PTA committees also plan after school fundraisers that encourage social interaction between school and community. These activities not only invite families to participate with their children, but also make lasting connections and friendships between students, teachers, parents and staff that carry on into the school setting.

We include fun and engaging activities throughout our academic programs in addition to our behavioral program. We celebrate "Dr. Seuss Week" which has a special theme each day and encourages students to participate in Read Across America Day. We recently celebrated the 100th day of school by incorporating math lessons into fun activities for the students. Science and Social Studies are fostered through activities such as visits from Animal Adventure, a local animal rescue. Keeping learning fun and engaging has proven to be a strength here at Robert Morris Elementary. This positive social and emotional environment plays a huge role in making an impact on our students' academics. Our students experience a sense of belonging, acceptance, support and trust which translates to an overall impact of accomplishment and achievement. A child who can make positive connections to his or her school, teachers and administrators will have greater success academically.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Robert Morris Elementary engages families and communities in a wide variety of ways which clearly impacts student success and school improvement. We involve families of students who are having academic or behavioral difficulties by offering a Child Study Process. A Child Study team involves the child, child's parents, regular education teacher, Title 1 Reading or Math Teacher, psychologist and any other outside agencies that are involved with the student. This team meets to develop measurable research-based strategies to help the child succeed. In addition, we also discuss strategies parents can use at home to help their child and encourage success. The team meets several times during the school year to monitor the

child's progress.

As previously mentioned, our SBBH team helps students succeed. The SBBH social workers are directly involved with parents and the teachers so that they can assist students in giving them strategies to make better choices at school, home and in the community. This in turn promotes increased academic and social success.

Practicum students from local universities and volunteer retired teachers work hand in hand with the teachers at Robert Morris Elementary to provide small group and one-on-one assistance to students who are in need of academic support. Due to the proximity of Marywood University to many of our students' homes, the children have the opportunity to participate in free after school tutoring programs. Marywood University also provides young adults to read to the students for Dr. Seuss Week. Volunteers participate in a Senior Pen Pal program with our fifth grade students to promote language arts skills and to establish a connection with a caring senior citizen. Junior Achievement of Northeastern Pennsylvania is a non-profit organization which promotes entrepreneurship, financial literacy and work readiness. Local business leaders and college students involved with this organization teach interactive civic lessons to all of our students. Providing children with positive adult role models is one of our goals at Robert Morris Elementary.

Robert Morris Elementary enhances the overall well-being of its students and their families by promoting a monthly free Local Farmer's Market, as well as a winter coat drive funded through donations by churches and organizations. Medical and dental support services are also available to our students. These programs keep students healthy and alleviate the financial burden that some of our families may encounter. Our students and families donate to several community organizations such as the United Way of Lackawanna County, Pennies for Pediatrics, as well local families in need. This helps students realize that there are others who are less fortunate and that even very young children can help their community in small but important ways. We also promote food drives to help students become good citizens and learn valuable life lessons in contributing to their community.

Robert Morris Elementary is in the heart of the Green Ridge section of Scranton, Pennsylvania. The Green Ridge Business Association (GRBA) partners with our school to assist with various seasonal activities. Together we make Robert Morris Elementary a fun place for students to go to school. The GRBA's financial contributions help fund various programs throughout the year. Local businesses also promote a sense of security and safety for the students. Our neighborhood bank is an evacuation point for the students to go to in the case of an emergency. We conduct evacuation drills to this location so that students and teachers feel prepared in case of an urgent situation. We are a proud neighborhood school, with many teachers living in the same community that their students do. Students know that they are cared for by their teachers because they often attend extra-curricular events that the students participate in, such as sports or theater productions. In conclusion, our deep community ties greatly increase student achievement and school involvement. Students at Robert Morris Elementary have a sense that many people in the community are involved in their educational, social, and emotional well-being.

3. Professional Development:

One of the most important steps the Scranton City School District took to support academic achievement was to align academic standards with our curriculum. Educational professionals attend a variety of in-service training's focused on enhancing the use of ELA and Math strategies. Various programs to support necessary ELA skills include Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Foundations Reading Program, and the Pearson Reading Series. To engage students in higher level math skills, professionals are trained in the Everyday Mathematics Program. Professionals also attend training's through the Northeast Educational Intermediate Unit on learning Pennsylvania's Common Core Standards for ELA and Mathematics.

Our district developed an extensive Child Study Process in which teachers have been thoroughly trained. As previously mentioned, this team consists of administrators, teachers, students, parents, psychologists, behavior specialists, and ELA and Math specialists. Our goal is to identify strengths and areas of need for

students who are having academic and/or behavioral difficulties. This is a lengthy process of gathering data which will be used to make necessary accommodations in the classroom. Scheduling meetings throughout the academic year allows the team to make adjustments to meet the needs of the child.

Medical professionals provide training to ensure the health and welfare of our Robert Morris Elementary students. The training's include Epi-pen and other allergy related issues, Child Abuse Reporting and Poverty Awareness.

The Scranton Federation of Teachers, the local teachers' union, provides a variety of courses that are available to our professionals through Educational Research and Dissemination (ER&D). These courses are designed to deliver the most up to date research based educational practices that focus on enhancing teaching techniques. Various courses offered are Managing Anti-Social Behavior, Instructional Strategies That Work, Thinking Math (K-2), Thinking Math (3-5), Foundations of Effective Teaching, and ELL training. Similarly, professional development in Science has been obtained through grant programs with NASA's educational branch. In this program, teachers learn new and exciting ways of delivering Next Generation Science Standards through exciting STEAM activities. This training correlates with use of the Scranton City School District's STEAM-mobile. Many of our professionals continually further their education by attending local universities and colleges. Perhaps the most important professional development method at Robert Morris Elementary is the collaboration of thoughts, ideas, and teaching methods throughout the various grade levels. Professionals communicate with each other on a daily basis in order to promote optimal student success.

The Scranton School District supports teachers with high quality professional development. Through a structured professional development program to increase the knowledge and skills of the professional staff, the district expects that improved student learning and growth will result. The purpose of the district's professional development plan is to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to directly align the plan to the comprehensive school improvement processes. Professional development activities take many forms in our school district and draw on knowledge, skills, perspectives, talents and contributions of K-12 educators. Professional development focuses on the knowledge and skill our instructional staff needs to create high levels of learning for all students. The district will provide professional development based on the needs that teachers feel are most pressing and also based on what our current data represents. The district's Professional Development Committee will ensure opportunities that provide appropriate professional growth for its employees. This committee is comprised of a teacher's union selected representatives, administration from different grade levels and district administration. Finally, our district offers our educators the opportunity to participate in our Educational Research and Dissemination Professional Development Program (ER &D) run through our local union, the Scranton Federation of Teachers. This is comprised of our district educators who have been trained in a specific topic area to train and "disseminate" the knowledge and content to our district employees.

4. School Leadership:

The Robert Morris Elementary family has a leadership philosophy that envisions a partnership of students, staff, parents, and the community working together to provide a nurturing, challenging and safe school environment. We are dedicated to ensuring that all children are guided toward achieving individual excellence, appreciating human value, contributing positively to a changing world, and becoming lifelong learners. The faculty and staff are committed to providing an environment where they can meet each child's academic, physical, social, and emotional needs. Robert Morris Elementary is a special place where children are cared for and nurtured daily.

The faculty and staff continue to set goals and expectations for students that far exceed the standards set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Commitment and accountability in maintaining these goals are a priority at Robert Morris Elementary. Our dynamic school offers numerous educational programs for Preschool through fifth grade. We pride ourselves on being a well-functioning team of school and community leaders consisting of: the Principal, Elementary Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Related Arts Teachers, Title 1 Reading and Math Teachers, Speech Therapists, School Psychologists, School Nurses, English Language Learning Teachers, SBBH staff, and Children and Youth Services.

Our Principal is presented with many responsibilities throughout the day. He understands the relationship between what he does and the impact on teachers' work, teacher efficiency, and student learning. Our Principal at Robert Morris Elementary models behavior by setting an example for staff and students to follow, which is consistent with his values. As a leader, he inspires our school community with a vision of the future. He promotes cooperation among staff and assists them to work together toward common goals. He expects excellence, quality, and high performance on the part of the staff in order to improve student learning. Our Principal supports the faculty and staff by not only respecting their thoughts and concerns but by also actively seeking opinions, and by challenging them to continually improve upon their work to meet the needs of each student in the school. Additionally, all district principals meet every month to discuss progress and share strategies and activities that have been effective in promoting student growth. There is no official "Leadership Team" in the building due to the small size of Robert Morris Elementary School, however many teachers often go above and beyond their normal workday to assist the principal in making this an outstanding educational experience for all students. The Principal also reaches out to aspiring educational leaders and includes them in daily school building responsibilities.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The most instrumental strategy in Robert Morris Elementary school's academic success is differentiated instruction. We utilize Title 1 math and reading supports, small learning support groups (both push-in and pull-out model) in special education and ELL, flexible ability-based whole group instruction, I-time (intervention for language arts), and collecting data to target mid-level identified learners. The goal of our differentiated classrooms is maximum student growth and individual success.

Our school implements the Title 1 math and reading programs to serve the students from low income families to help insure that the children meet the challenging state academic standards. These students are in flexible groups based on their academic needs. Their progress is monitored monthly, and groups can be altered based on specific needs. These flexible groupings allow for overall student success because they are receiving supplemental instruction in reading and math.

Robert Morris's special education and English language learner programs follow both "push-in" and "pull-out" model. This provides an opportunity for students with similar abilities to thrive in a small group learning environment. The classroom teacher and the special education and English language learner teachers collaborate daily to ensure that all student needs are met on an ongoing basis. The "pull-out" model allows for small groups to receive assistance with completing assessments and completion of progress monitoring. The "push-in" model allows for small groups of students to have information read to them, to have questions re-worded, and to have help understanding the material that is presented in the classroom.

Many of the classrooms in our school implement flexible ability-based whole group instruction, allowing for students to be placed in groups depending on level of achievement. The performance of the students in these groups is analyzed monthly and students can be placed in different groups based on need and performance. Following this procedure often results in higher test scores on state testing because each student's achievement is tracked and monitored often, allowing for the student to move to the whole-group environment that fits him or her the best for each unit of instruction.

Our language arts program has a component which allows for thirty minutes a day of intensive instruction and skills reinforcement in small homogeneous groups. During this "Intervention-time" instruction, the teachers employ authentic texts, performance tasks, phonemic awareness activities, guided reading instruction and TDA (Text Dependent Analysis) written responses. PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) coach books are used to provide additional exposure to test taking. These books also provide an opportunity for teachers to guide their instruction according to students' strengths and weaknesses.

The faculty at Robert Morris identified the need for collecting data to target mid-level identified learners. We noticed a deficiency in TDA responses in language arts. That data drove us to reach out to our local NEIU in order to find ways to improve our overall student performance on state tests. As a result, our teachers use data to guide their instructional strategies. The data that is collected targets the mid-level achieving students so the teachers can give more focus and attention to those groups. The data allows each teacher to see individual students' strengths and weaknesses. It allows for clearer guidelines to present additional instruction of the curriculum.

The staff at Robert Morris is accountable for all of the strategies mentioned above. Schedules are followed to ensure consistency and daily/weekly data collection is done with diligence by all the staff members at Robert Morris Elementary School. Robert Morris Elementary school began departmentalizing ELA and Math/Science/Social Studies instruction for grades three, four and five in the 2014-2015 academic year. The teachers and principal saw an opportunity for our teachers to focus on and master one or two subjects. The departmentalization of the teachers at Robert Morris Elementary provides a greater ability to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of all learners. Our PSSA state test scores increased in all three grade levels the year that departmentalizing was implemented. Students are better prepared in all subject areas because the teachers are able to more closely monitor all in their specific subject areas. We have proven that departmentalizing at these levels has benefited our students.

