

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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 6 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	12	8	20
K	25	41	66
1	32	28	60
2	31	28	59
3	40	34	74
4	32	37	69
5	43	41	84
6	38	32	70
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	253	249	502

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 1 % Asian
 - 11 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 81 % White
 - 6 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

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

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	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	28
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	57
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	498
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 40 %
Total number students who qualify: 200

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %
83 Total number of students served

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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>2</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>3</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>44</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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

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

Required Information	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	97%	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.

Provide a learning environment that prepares all students for college, careers, and a successful life in a global society.

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

Families may submit an application for their child(ren) to attend Mount Lebanon Elementary as long as they reside within the Anderson School District Four attendance zone and can provide transportation. Admission and annual renewal is contingent upon school/grade enrollment numbers, a satisfactory discipline record, and satisfactory attendance.

PART III – SUMMARY

Nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the town of Pendleton has enjoyed a long, rich history. Today, historic sites are still numerous, many living side-by-side with their modern counterparts. Our community has a tradition of taking pride in its past, but realizes that constant growth and change point us toward the future. It is the same for our schools.

Prior to the opening of Mount Lebanon Elementary (MLES), Anderson School District Four had three elementary schools. To address the population growth in 2005, it was decided that a new school would be built to accommodate the needs of students and to maintain the integrity of high student achievement, lower class ratios, and community schooling. The school's name, Mount Lebanon, is a symbolic merging of the names of the two former schools that served this community (Mountain Spring School and Lebanon School) and honors the rich history of the progressive African American community as well as the physical design of the former Lebanon School through its two-story brick building, majestic columns, and cupola. School colors symbolizing the importance of both Mountain Spring and Lebanon School's heritage are reflected in the current colors of MLES (blue and yellow).

Mount Lebanon Elementary opened its doors to students in the fall of 2007, stating as its mission "to empower students to be responsible, lifelong learners by providing an academically challenging and nurturing environment." In keeping with the school's vision "to provide a learning environment that prepares all students for college, careers, and a successful life in a global society," we have implemented a multitude of initiatives and traditions setting our school apart.

Our student body represents diverse backgrounds and experiences with 20% qualifying for the gifted and talent program and 17% qualifying for special education services. In addition, 40% of our students qualify for subsidized meals. Overall, our parents are extremely supportive and engaged in their children's education with 100% attending conferences with teachers annually. We also have a very active PTO, SIC, and volunteer program.

Academically, the core curriculum heavily supports academic achievement and growth for all students. In regards to meeting individual student needs, Mount Lebanon implements Response to Intervention and Acceleration strategies throughout all grades. Our school has also been a district leader in implementing SMART Time (Start Making A Reader Today) for students in kindergarten through second grade as well as implementing the Everyday Math curriculum, which provides opportunities for mastering mathematics concepts through spiraled instruction.

One of the many things about our district that shows an emphasis on personalized learning is that each elementary school has a "Signature Experience" for students. This allows each elementary school to create its own unique educational experience. At Mount Lebanon, our "Signature Experience" is STEM and it is evident in all aspects of our school and serves as the basis for all that we do. As a result, we were the first elementary school in the nation to receive the AdvancED STEM certification.

In addition, there are numerous unique events that enhance the academic realm of the school, such as Literacy Nights, STEM Nights, Author/Illustrator Visits, Book Fairs, Writers Guild, Family Dances, School Gardens, Student Council, and a variety of after-school clubs (Lego, Chimes, Chorus, Broadcast, Running, and Archery).

Emotionally and socially, our students have access to a comprehensive school counseling program ensuring that all students are educated about being well-rounded citizens. Instruction is delivered through classroom guidance, lessons focusing on Erin's Law, teacher-facilitated morning meetings from the Olweus bullying prevention program, and pairings of students with mentors through Mentor UPSTATE.

Physically, all students participate weekly in physical education as well as have the opportunity to participate in Morning Movement or Running Club, which offers opportunities for walking and/or running to get active before or after school. Teachers in all classrooms use various forms of active learning to get

students up and moving throughout the day. Some options include GoNoodle, brain breaks, and other forms of activities, making physical movement a priority. Our PTO annually sponsors Boosterthon, our largest fundraiser. This is a fun way to incorporate running as a celebration at the end of a pledge period.

Culturally, we have a tight-knit community of parents and teachers who create the strong fabric of our school that continues to radiate love, support, and encouragement for students. Every student receives a free school t-shirt, all students have the opportunity to attend field trips regardless of financial need, and many families receive assistance with utilities accounts, rental payments, fuel, groceries, medical visits, and prescription costs.

The community's perception of our school is one of innovation, opportunity, and growing students. Our faculty and staff members support these perceptions on a daily basis. Building relationships has been a key factor in creating an atmosphere of warmth and support that fosters learning. As a result, every student has their academic, social, cultural, physical, and emotional needs met.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Universal student success is the goal at Mount Lebanon Elementary. We provide a rigorous but personal learning environment, where skills and strategies leading to success are mastered as students progress through grade levels. Teachers present content standards by offering opportunities for students to communicate, collaborate, and think deeply. In keeping with our state’s profile of a successful 21st Century Graduate, students work to construct a world-class knowledge base and skills, as well as strong life and career characteristics. This approach to teaching content and concepts across the core curriculum supports our philosophy of doing whatever it takes to grow student thinkers.

English Language Arts: Guided by the South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards for ELA, focus at all grade levels includes literary and informational text, writing, and communication with the knowledge that disciplinary literacy and inquiry-based standards are woven throughout content. Foundational knowledge begins in the early years as students are introduced to concepts of print, phonemic awareness, and fluency. These concepts build as text complexity increases. The fundamentals of reading, writing, and communication are integrated in content areas with the goal of all students becoming proficient readers, writers, and communicators.

Math: The math curriculum is based on the South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards. These content standards, paired with the overarching mathematical process standards, help students develop a deep understanding of key concepts and skills, moving them to the end goal of being mathematically literate, successful graduates. Strands at each grade level include Number Sense and Base Ten, Algebraic Thinking and Operations, Geometry, and Measurement and Data Analysis. Foundational skills move from concrete to abstract representations of concepts, while research-based programs, including Everyday Math, allow students to develop foundational and critical thinking skills. These key concepts, coupled with the development of mathematical vocabulary and problem-solving skills, ensure the ability to connect and apply math knowledge to real world situations. Math practices, integrated with the STEM and Engineering Design process, allow students multiple opportunities to reason, communicate, collaborate, and validate thinking in a math literate environment.

Science: At Mount Lebanon, science content is based on the South Carolina Standards and Performance Indicators for Science. The primary goal and core of our science curriculum is to provide foundational knowledge of science concepts and to deepen understanding of these as students progress through science studies. Across grade levels, standards focus on three core disciplines: physical science, life science, and earth science. Knowledge is connected across disciplines through common threads, themes, and practices designed to help students identify universal scientific properties and interact with the curriculum as scientists and engineers. At each grade level, science and engineering practices provide students with opportunities to integrate engineering processes, literacy skills, and math concepts. As the first nationally certified STEM school, The Engineering Design Process is woven into our entire curriculum. Students set goals, ask questions, imagine, plan, create, and improve, in an effort to provide daily opportunities for inquiry based scientific processes.

Social Studies: The Social Studies curriculum is comprised of content implemented through the South Carolina Social Studies Academic Standards. The scope and sequence of foundational knowledge begins with a focus on family, community, and culture and how we, as responsible citizens, contribute to our communities. Students continue building this knowledge as the focus becomes the history of our state, country and world. The curriculum integrates Social Studies Literacy Skills for the 21st Century, including text, maps, timelines, images, and artifacts. Fiction and nonfiction texts are integrated to address these skills as students gain understanding of how a democratic society operates.

Pre-K Four Year Old Kindergarten

The core curriculum for our preschoolers includes English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social

Studies. Student learning is fostered through the use of music, movement, play, and technology in each content area as they participate in developmentally appropriate activities with literacy at the core of each. These activities develop language and social skills, enabling them to communicate and collaborate in their learning community.

Literacy is the cornerstone of our 4K program. Students are introduced to letters, sounds, words, and oral language skills through daily reading and writing opportunities. Foundational learning begins with concepts of print, phonemic awareness, and the recognition of environmental print. Students sing, chant, and move as they internalize language and build vocabulary.

Problem solving, creativity, and exploration are at the heart of the mathematics curriculum, with the goal of building thinkers. Practices from Everyday Math and Engage New York, both spiraling curricula, support this philosophy as they introduce foundational concepts and ideas, including number sense, geometry, data, and measurement, as precursors to experiences in later grades. Multiple opportunities to revisit these concepts allow young learners to enter 5K with a strong math foundation.

Science concepts and skills, including inquiry, exploration, physical science, and life science are introduced through literacy and hands-on activities, bringing the curriculum to life. The impact of learning to describe, recognize, and communicate about the world provides a level of excitement, preparing young learners for future content.

Young learners are introduced to Social Studies content as they participate in learning activities each day. Community is developed as they engage in and prepare for civic responsibilities and productive citizenship. Opportunities to make a variety of choices through decision making processes allow students to explore their role in the global community.

Through this robust approach to four-year-old kindergarten, our students are prepared socially, emotionally, and academically for five-year-old kindergarten the following year.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

World class knowledge, skills, and life and career characteristics are all evident in Mount Lebanon Elementary School related arts classes. All students in kindergarten through sixth grade experience PE, Music, Visual Arts, Engineering and Library Science on a weekly basis and sixth grade students have the option of taking Band.

In Visual Arts classes, students make relevant connections across the curriculum. Students continually problem-solve. Writing is incorporated into art through self-reflections of their own artwork and evaluations of others' works. Computers are used to research artwork from SC and around the world and then create art based on those styles. Engineering skills are incorporated through work in designing prior to creation and construction. The classroom is used as a working studio for students to produce. They work under deadlines and use a rubric that they have to adhere to for each project which incorporates the elements and principles of art. Artwork is displayed throughout the school to showcase what students have learned. Explore the Arts is an after school program that provides extra exposure to visual arts for gifted and talented students. Students also have opportunities to showcase their artistic talent throughout the community through displays at Pendleton's Town Hall and at the Anderson Arts Center.

In Engineering, world-class knowledge is addressed daily by introducing students to the Engineering Design Process and allowing them to work through real-life problems. Students learn how the design process is ongoing and open ended in nature. They then use the Engineering Design Process to identify a need, research and sketch possible solutions, and make modifications. Students collaborate in small groups to imagine, design, test, and refine their engineering projects. This teaches students to see multiple perspectives in solving problems, the art of compromise, how to draw upon each other's strengths, and practice active listening and conflict resolution. All of these skills are vital for all future career paths. Our students are also fortunate to have access to various types of technology and media in the engineering lab. These resources further enhance their learning experience by allowing them to research topics, create blueprints, annotate

videos and articles, create 3D models for a project, or design robots to perform a certain task. Technology allows for customized lessons that fit the needs of individual students and allows them to work independently at their own pace.

Physical Education at Mount Lebanon Elementary provides a comprehensive approach to being active and making sure students are physically literate. In early grades, students focus on developing fundamental gross motor skills, following rules, taking turns, good sportsmanship and spatial awareness. In later grades the focus includes teamwork, strategic game play, developing skill sets as well as being exposed to a variety of sports and places an added emphasis on goal setting and progress tracking. Students in all grades discover their own personal fitness levels, what they mean, and how to attain a level of fitness that is suitable for them on an individual basis and to be healthy for life. A school wide commitment to community service and physical fitness is evident through our participation in “Jump Rope for Heart.” In regards to extracurricular activities, we have an afternoon Running Club, opportunities for morning movement before school, and a school archery team (where we placed third in the most recent state competition).

Music, as a performing art, is taught using a proficiency approach to learning, providing the students with not only a deeper understanding of the artistic processes and skills but also application of these processes by performance within the classroom, demonstrating higher order thinking and competencies for relationship building. Music classes focus on the actual ‘doing’ of music and correlate ELA, math, and physics concepts as well as cultural and historical exploration. Kindergarten through second grade students develop the ability to distinguish between and vocalize pitches both aurally and orally incorporating musical sentences and phrasing, as well as developing an understanding and application of musical math concepts through rhythmic movement, meter recognition, and visual recognition and response. Third graders focus on reading from the music page, interpreting music symbols and markings, in a variety of styles by performing on recorders. The fourth through sixth grade general music experience is unique for our students in that they create in each class a performance ensemble setting playing hand chimes; recognizing, interpreting, responding to, and applying all musical elements; building and strengthening neurologic synapsis throughout all areas of the brain. For students desiring a higher-level performance experience, an after-school chimes ensemble and a choral ensemble meet weekly, each culminating in public performances and outreach.

In Library/Technology, students learn how reading, exploring, and using information can take us to other worlds. Four-year-old kindergarten students come to the library once a week for story-time and checkout. Our schedule allows for students in 5K-6th grade to alternate weeks, attending library one week and the computer lab the next, all for 50 minute sessions. On the weeks they have computer lab, kindergarten through second graders still come for a shortened library time for checkout. During their technology time, students participate in activities that help them to meet state and district proficiencies. They spend time keyboarding, learning digital citizenship skills, and even practicing core skills using various applications in the Google environment. During library time, students are exposed to various types of print and digital media, and they are immersed in the love of reading as they participate in interactive read-alouds. Lessons, rich with quality children’s literature, center around the 21st Century Learning Framework and the South Carolina ELA standards for each grade level. From distinguishing between genre types, to analyzing characters in stories, to using a database to find information, instruction varies. Students also participate in reading incentives such as the Clemson-Carolina Read to the Big Game, the Greenville Drive All Stars, and the South Carolina Book Award Voting Program. Finally, a weekly broadcast is also produced in our library, by a team of fifth grade students and the media specialist. Students learn communication, production and presentation skills as part of this team.

Our long-term goal at Mount Lebanon is not to produce just proficient students, but empowered learners. This happens regularly in our related arts classes by setting a tone for learning that suggests possibility, and by creating a culture of “can.” Given the right tools, guidance, and motivation, the potential for student success is limitless!

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

At Mount Lebanon Elementary, highly qualified teachers and administration work in tandem to provide effective and efficient instruction, differentiated interventions, and a variety of assessments to meet the needs of all students. These practices coincide to create a high performing school environment.

Instruction and intervention are used daily to target all learners. Through intentional planning and leveled instruction, teachers create high expectations to ensure all students are successful. In early education classrooms, Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) is used daily to close gaps in achievement and create lifelong readers. Response to Intervention (RTI) is used to improve the skills of students performing below grade level. Instead of looking at RTI as a road to special education, it is used to emphasize individualized instructional methods. Effective RTI instruction relies on frequency, documentation, and consistency across grade levels. This instruction is enhanced through an hour of daily SMART (Start Making a Reader Today) Time and Enrichment. Kindergarten through second grade uses fluid grouping in SMART Time to reinforce and advance reading and math instruction. In grades three through six, gifted and talented, special education, and on-grade level students are served simultaneously in ability-grouped classrooms. Students are also pulled as needed for extra assistance by related arts teachers and volunteers, including education majors at local universities, professors, and community members.

Additionally, students are targeted for growth and reinforcement goals throughout daily instruction. Balanced literacy, guided reading and math, and hands-on science and social studies instruction is intentionally planned to target learning styles and achievement goals. Individualized instruction is provided to supplement content. Advanced learners meet once weekly to explore high-level mathematical concepts. Across the school, student learning is differentiated through choice. Through book clubs, students take responsibility for their own learning by completing reading and comprehension assignments at home and conversing with peers at school. Genius Hour is utilized to empower students to research and create passion projects.

MLES proudly strives to provide technology integration in every classroom, equipping all students in grades two through six with Chromebooks and in grades kindergarten through first with one device for every two students. In addition to Chromebooks, technology is infused in instruction with the use of Clear Touch Interactive devices, Nabi Tablets, iPads, and SMART Boards. Technology at MLES maximizes engagement, generates rigor, and encourages communication and collaboration at school and with parent involvement. Chromebooks facilitate autonomy in student learning through blogging with neighboring schools, student-created works within G Suite for Education, and personalized global opportunities. Students are exposed to coding within the Engineering Lab, creating cumulative coded projects throughout the year as well as participating in the worldwide Hour of Code annually. Technology provides a natural outlet for differentiated instruction to enhance intervention and advanced learning. Teachers and administrators intentionally select research-based programs, curriculum-based apps, and websites that enhance core curriculum and STEM-centered instruction.

Assessments are crafted to emphasize student-centered learning aligned to state standards. In grades K-2, the use of Standards-Based Reporting integrates rubrics into daily learning to inform students about the expectations required to achieve. This development of responsibility and understanding of performance facilitates a growth mindset that is reinforced with more complex rubrics in grades 3-6. Students are allowed multiple opportunities to exhibit mastery of core content. Consistent, appropriate feedback is provided to students, parents, and all stakeholders to enhance growth mindset. In the classroom, authentic assessments reinforce understanding and real-world application. A balance of formative and summative assessments is used to guide instruction. Project-based learning, self-guided research, and student reflective practices ensure demonstrative knowledge of targeted instruction. Multiple assessment tools are utilized including readiness assessments in 4K and 5K, Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), and district-mandated common assessments to prepare students for South Carolina state assessments (SCREADY and SCPASS). Through the utilization of these assessment processes and the way the results of these assessments drive instruction, MLES is a high performing school. We maintain high levels of achievement through implementation and revision of these effective practices.

Genuine and reflective data analysis is essential for effective assessment. Teachers meet during common planning with grade-level teams to discuss student progress. These supportive discussions validate where the students are and where they should go to supplement and reinforce instruction, as needed. These discussions are enhanced during weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLC) with administration, instructional and reading coaches, and the RTI coordinator. Teachers use classroom and district assessments to reflect on student learning and assessment practices as well as to build in the necessary rigor to challenge students at all levels.

Mount Lebanon Elementary School maintains high-levels of achievement because the primary focus of instruction, interventions, and assessment is student achievement and growth. Every teacher in our school upholds the responsibility to support each student and tailor instruction based on personalized, educational needs in a 21st Century learning environment.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

The foundation of Mount Lebanon Elementary School is providing a learning environment that prepares all students for college, careers, and a successful life in a global society. This begins with fostering a nurturing climate and culture that is inclusive to all students, staff, parents, and community members who make up the Mount Lebanon family. The school aspires to engage and motivate each student by considering all facets of the student including his or her social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs.

The Mount Lebanon framework for building character is facilitated through our ROARS Code of Conduct. The ROARS framework sets the expectation for behavior and character exemplified throughout the school. Each letter represents a core value for which every individual is held accountable: Respect, Ownership, Attitude, Responsibility, and Safety. These values are introduced on the first day of school and are emphasized each day throughout the year. Teachers build classroom communities around this framework and this sets the stage for a positive learning environment where outstanding behavior and citizenship are highlighted.

Mount Lebanon supports learners' academic progress and outstanding achievement through both incentives and opportunities for recognition. Students are recognized through awards every nine weeks as well as at the end of the year. The Mount Lebanon Writers Guild ceremony celebrates achievement in writing by acknowledging students who have shown growth or exceptional writing skills. Opportunities for enrichment such as reading to the principal, community volunteer read alouds in the classroom, and SMART (Start Making a Reader Today) time help to establish a culture of reading throughout the school.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was adopted by Mount Lebanon as an approach to limit bullying behaviors and implement a protocol for addressing incidents of bullying throughout the school year. This framework allows for students to feel safe within the school building and provides consistency for discipline related to bullying. Teachers have weekly classroom meetings with their students, which advocates for a culture of trust and accountability within the school. At the beginning of each school year, all students and staff participate in the Olweus Kick-off to re-establish the school's anti-bullying rules and to emphasize our zero tolerance policy for bullying behavior. This year, each individual class completed activities with the theme of compassion and kindness for others. This included a school-wide read aloud book for kindergarten through second grade, and a novel for third grade through sixth grade.

Positive teacher morale is imperative to build and foster a desire for learning in our students. The administrative team values teachers as trusted professionals, which is reflected in many ways throughout the school year. Teacher observations are utilized as supportive tools that highlight and celebrate good teaching practices. The administrative feedback is called "Spotlight on Instruction." These inspirational notes are posted on the classroom door in order to recognize several of the best practices used during instruction. As an external reward, monthly gift card drawings and a "treat trolley" that distributes snacks to faculty are utilized to show appreciation to the staff for their daily commitment to students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Opportunities for engagement that are inclusive to families and community members are imperative to maintaining Mount Lebanon's family-first environment. The school hosts several events throughout the year that offer students, parents, extended family, and community members a chance to collaborate with school personnel to create meaningful learning experiences and invaluable memories.

Special Person's Week is a designated celebration that is unique to Mount Lebanon Elementary. Students are encouraged to invite any guest whom they consider special in their life to join them during an extended lunch period. This strengthens the bond between students and the community by using our school building as a platform where lasting memories can be created. An additional community event that is held during the school day is the Veteran's Day Program. Veterans are invited to come to the school for a school-wide

assembly to honor those who have served our country.

Several of the evening events held at Mount Lebanon Elementary allow for the opportunity for parents to initiate and facilitate their students' learning beyond the classroom. One of the highlights of the school year is the annual Family Engineering/STEM Night, where families are invited to explore hands-on learning experiences related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Engineering and education students from nearby Clemson University as well as local business representatives collaborate with families to facilitate the activities at this event. This is an opportunity to open our school doors to various partners and extends the school name across the community. Other unique events, including Family Literacy Night and Dr. Seuss Night, offer age-appropriate opportunities for families to foster a love of reading. Both events provide an entertaining and educational experience for students and their families.

Effective communication between school and home supports a prosperous school culture that Mount Lebanon recognizes as a key to the success of students within the building. Open lines of communication are maintained with parents and guardians through our weekly "Thursday Folders" as well as through monthly School Improvement Council and PTO meetings, which are open to anyone who wants to attend. The school's social media presence through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as well as the school and classroom web pages allow Mount Lebanon to keep families digitally connected to events that are occurring within the school and the community.

The surrounding community is essential in coordinating resources for the students and their families who need support. The United Way of Anderson provides Weekend Snack Packs to students who need food to eat over the weekends. In addition, local churches and organizations provide families with Christmas assistance, meals over long school breaks, and access to additional resources that are imperative to the health and well-being of the school families. Ensuring the basic needs of the families are met is important to the school culture that Mount Lebanon strives to maintain.

3. Professional Development:

Working within our belief system of growing student thinkers, Mount Lebanon Elementary has adopted the same belief of developing thinking teachers. With the goal of increasing instructional capacity, our approach includes embedded professional development (PD) through our school's instructional and literacy coaches, teacher led PD, as well as outside resources, including district personnel, independent consultants, and webinars. Our professional development focus is intentional and based on student data results and the needs of current teachers. Both formative and summative data is considered as decisions are made concerning development of best practices, resulting in increased student achievement and an increase in the knowledge capacity of our teachers.

PD opportunities at the district level allow teachers to gain new knowledge and for grade level and vertical collaboration. Not only are these opportunities led by instructional and reading coaches, but they are led by teacher leaders as well. Teachers provide strategies for implementation in content areas, building their repertoire of strategies. This approach has proved very successful as current classroom teachers are able to provide situational results on the strategies being presented.

At the school level, PD is presented during weekly professional learning community (PLC) meetings. Other opportunities are provided through faculty meetings. For example, each month, teachers present information from professional articles related to specific needs. To stay current with content related best practices, our PD focuses on math strategies, as well as opportunities to integrate best literacy practices in all content areas. For our current school year, we used our school data to provide an intentional focus targeting math strategies for number sense and algebraic thinking and operations. Literacy data shows needs in areas of engagement and targeted intervention. These areas are addressed during embedded PLC meetings.

PD at Mount Lebanon not only includes opportunities to build instructional capacity but also opportunities to address other significant school level needs including technology and safety concerns. PD is presented through digital learning PLCs and faculty meetings. With our district being one-to-one with technological

devices, digital learning PLCs focus on integrating instructional technology, as well as digital citizenship. Health related PD led by our school nurse, such as CPR/AED/Trauma training and Safeschools training, provides opportunities to gain knowledge in nurturing the whole child.

Finally, teachers have the freedom to seek out professional opportunities of individual interest. Teachers can request to attend conferences related to specific content areas, specific needs of students or their needs as teachers. These opportunities provide teachers with knowledge that can be implemented in classrooms and shared with other colleagues. These opportunities empower teachers and build capacity which has a positive impact for all students.

Targeted professional development is the focus of growing teachers at Mount Lebanon Elementary. Indications are that this model has been and will continue to be successful as teachers gain knowledge and implement strategies and best practices.

4. School Leadership:

Education is a “people” business. Every aspect of teaching and learning has a “people” component and the administration at Mount Lebanon Elementary places an emphasis on building relationships with all stakeholders (students, employees, parents, community members). It is understood that positive, personal relationships must be an ingrained part of the school culture for students to be successful.

In addition, the school leadership believes in setting clear expectations for all students and employees (both instructional and support) and then supporting those individuals to meet those expectations. For students, there are school-wide expectations for student behavior called the Wildcat ROARS (Respect, Ownership, Attitude, Responsibility, and Safety) Code of Conduct. These expectations are regularly communicated so that all students know what they need to do in order to be successful students as well as successful citizens. For employees, expectations are clearly communicated at the beginning of each year and then reviewed quarterly. These expectations are grouped into three categories: 1) Students are your first priority, 2) Maintain professionalism at all times, and 3) Take pride in YOU. In addition to general expectations that guide employee decision-making, classroom teachers are also provided a list of “Non-Negotiables” at the beginning of each year. These non-negotiables provide teachers with daily required responsibilities so that there are no questions about what needs to be done each day (ex. taking attendance, lesson plans, adhering to daily schedules).

Proactive communication is also a priority for the school leadership at Mount Lebanon Elementary. Weekly communication is initiated with all staff members through the principal’s “Monday Message” email. Included in that email are weekly announcements as well as a two-week ‘look ahead’ for the calendar. In addition, there are various meetings held regularly where the school leadership meets with stakeholders and engages in two-way communication so that multiple perspectives are represented when decisions are made. Those meetings include monthly Faculty Meetings (with all staff members), monthly School Leadership Council Meetings (with grade level chairpersons), weekly Admin Team Meetings (with the instructional coach, reading coach, and school counselor), weekly Office Staff Meetings (with the secretary, bookkeeper, and school nurse), weekly Professional Learning Communities (with each group of grade level teachers), and monthly PTO/SIC Meetings (with all stakeholders interested in attending).

In addition, the school leadership believes in investing in the individual capital of all faculty members and empowering them to be the best they can be. This begins with hiring quality individuals and then providing relevant opportunities for professional growth. In addition, the school leadership gives teachers the autonomy to make decisions regarding instruction that are in the best interest of the students. Basically, we expect our teachers to do whatever it takes for their students to be successful and our teachers rise to meet that challenge on a daily basis.

Through positive relationships, clear expectations, and empowerment of the faculty, the leadership at Mount Lebanon have created a school culture that is conducive for optimal student achievement and success.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Mount Lebanon, we pride ourselves on utilizing best practices in all aspects of the school from instructional planning to assessment to data analysis to professional development with the ultimate goals of student engagement and student achievement. However, the one practice that we employ that has the most profound impact on student success is our implementation of STEM. This is illustrated through our school's tagline, "Engineering our Students' Future through Science, Technology, and Math."

As indicated in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, our school is helping all students develop the world class skills and life and career characteristics by integrating STEM instruction with the general curriculum at all levels. As the first AdvancED STEM-certified elementary school in the nation, Mount Lebanon realizes that economic growth in the 21st century will be driven by our graduates' ability to create ideas and translate them into innovative products and services. To that end, STEM skills taught in conjunction with the core content areas along with inquiry and research skills are critical for preparing students for college, careers, and life. This is evident at our school through many different opportunities that are made available to our students on a regular basis.

First, through our weekly related arts schedule, our students visit the Engineering Lab where all students engage in real world experiences through hands-on projects under the direction of a STEM-specific teacher. In addition, classroom teachers create project-based learning opportunities throughout the core content instruction with an expanded focus on all areas of STEM. A common theme throughout all of our classes and content areas is the implementation of the "Engineering Design Process," which provides our students with a framework for problem solving. We are also fortunate to have collaboration with local universities (ex. Clemson) and businesses (ex. Bosch) that provide engaging experiences that allow students to apply the skills and content learned to everyday situations.

Other opportunities offered throughout the year such as Genius Hour, Creation Stations, Lego Robotics Teams, School Gardens, an International Jet Toy competition, a district-wide Sailboat Challenge, and Family STEM Night also engage our students and families in unique STEM-focused experiences.

Finally, our district's 1:1 technology initiative provides each student in grades 2-6 with a Chromebook as well as provides every two students in grades K-1 access to a Chromebook. Through this access to technology, our students are immersed in digital learning from kindergarten through sixth grade and, as a result, have an increased awareness of digital citizenship as well as an understanding of the tech competencies needed to function in our digital world.

Through our school-wide emphasis on STEM, our students have the opportunity to develop, refine, and master critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork. Those skills then transfer to all aspects of their learning and, as a result, contribute to maximized student engagement and student achievement.