

U.S. Department of Education
2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [] Title I [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Tammy M Riggs

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Colonial Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2941 Webster Road

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Blue Ridge VA 24064-1914
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County VA

Telephone (540) 977-6773

Fax (540) 977-4219

Web site/URL https://coes.bcps.k12.va.us/

E-mail triggs@bcps.k12.va.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. John Busher

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail jbusher@bcps.k12.va.us

District Name Botetourt County Public Schools Tel. (540) 473-8263

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mrs. Michelle Crook

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

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):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 11 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

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

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	7	1	8
K	35	29	64
1	32	29	61
2	29	27	56
3	37	27	64
4	30	27	57
5	30	38	68
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	200	178	378

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 87 % White
 - 7 % 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: 9%

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	22
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2016 until the end of the 2016-2017 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	37
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2016	401
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.09
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 30%
Total number students who qualify: 112

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %
62 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>5</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>16</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>11</u> Developmentally Delayed | <u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>44</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 16
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	18
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	5
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.	3

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

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

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

Educating Children...Making a Difference...Because We Care.

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

Colonial Elementary School is the oldest school in our school division, built in 1939, and is located in the Blue Ridge area of Botetourt County. We are not located in a town or city. In fact, our attendance area consists of several neighborhoods, churches, farms, one grocery store and a post office along the Route 460 East corridor. In many ways, our school is the center of the community. At 79 years old, we now have multiple generations of families who have actually attended Colonial. Therefore, the community is our school community, past and present, and they take great pride in their school. For many years, our attendance zone consisted of stable, middle class families. With the decline of the economy in recent years, our demographic has changed as our percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch has almost doubled, going from 15.6% in 2010, to 20% in 2013, and now stands at 29.6% in 2017. In spite of that, the Colonial community thrives in enthusiasm for education as well as pride and support of our school. This is evidenced by the strong parental involvement at our school.

Our graduates continue to feel a long lasting connection to our school. As a result, we have a tradition that our Colonial graduates come back home to their elementary school the day after they graduate from high school or college, and walk the halls of our school, in their caps and gowns, while our current students line the halls and clap for them. It is just as special to our current students as it is to our graduates.

Leadership is a significant focus at Colonial. We implemented The Leader in Me 12 years ago. Colonial is the only school in our division to adopt and teach the leadership principles of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. We believe that everyone can be a leader. “Leadership is doing the right thing even if nobody is watching,” hangs in our hallways. We believe in doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do, not because there is a reward for it. The leadership principles we teach become imbedded in the lives of students in and out of school. It is a common language our families adopt and encourage at home. Early on, our students know what it means to be proactive and to begin with the end in mind. They know what it is to seek first to understand, then be understood. And these are just a few of the leadership principles we not only teach, but live each and every day. We also have four core beliefs which are displayed in every room, and bring the 7 habits together into four simple statements: We are kind. We are respectful. We are responsible. We always give our personal best. These core beliefs and leadership principles are what will carry our students in life - they challenge them to do their best academically, to push themselves to be all they can be physically and athletically, and to regulate themselves emotionally and socially. We produce leaders, in and out of the classroom.

Colonial is inclusive in nature, philosophy and practice. Our special education population, while only 16% of our student body, is an important part of each classroom. We teach that everyone learns differently and our students of all instructional levels discover and share their learning styles, preferences and needs in student led conferences, which brings an awareness and appreciation of the differences among our students.

Some Colonial traditions include the Mother Son Amazing Race, Father Daughter Dance, and the annual Boosterthon. Our Mother Son Amazing Race is a night of challenging stations which moms and their sons work through together with other mother-son teams. Each team consists of boys from all grade levels, so teams are not made up of friend groups and it gives older students opportunity to put others (the younger boys) before themselves and to encourage others. The Father Daughter Dance is a special themed dance for our girls and their fathers, grandfathers, or special guests. Our families look forward to this event all year long. Our young ladies feel special and loved. The Boosterthon is our annual PTA fundraiser. However, it is much more than a fundraiser; it teaches leadership principles, character, and encourages physical fitness as well, as the culminating activity is a fun run, in which ALL students participate, while being cheered on by the many parents and grandparents who attend. Perhaps the greatest benefit of participating in the Boosterthon, however, is the sense of community it builds at the beginning of the year as new transfer and kindergarten parents are immediately immersed in our culture and community and are instantly part of something grand and, right away, they belong.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

“The kids in our classroom are infinitely more significant than the subject matter we teach.” Meladee McCarty

Colonial Elementary’s core curriculum is based on the Virginia Standards of Learning. These standards serve as the foundation of students’ learning, providing a springboard for teachers to enhance and enrich instruction. At Colonial, teachers in all grade levels teach all core curriculum subjects, as we do not departmentalize at any grade level. Each teacher is responsible for knowing and understanding reading, math, science, and social studies content for their grade level as well as understanding the vertical alignment of standards across grade levels.

Children aged 2-5 with identified disabilities or delays, who qualify, receive special education and related services through our Early Childhood Special Education program. This program provides students with experiences that support the development of school readiness. Children in our ECSE program are given a variety of experiences that are designed to support the academic, motor, language, and social/emotional needs of our students. This program also gives its students opportunities to interact with typically developing peers to provide typically developing roles models for communication, social skills and language development.

A balanced literacy approach is utilized in reading to meet all grade level standards. A variety of materials including leveled readers, grade level reading passages, and trade book novels are used to expose students to the many different genres of text. Different settings are used to instruct reading including whole group, small group, and independent work. Whole group lessons are based on the skills listed in our adopted text and language arts program, which has provides a framework for instructing students in reading skills and strategies. Each grade level follows the same progression of skills on their level. Three week units of main idea and details, sequence, inference, summarization, compare and contrast, cause and effect, author’s purpose, and fact and opinion are used to ensure students are provided with all skills needed to develop reading comprehension strategies. Small group lessons are used to support the instruction that occurs during whole group. The same progression of skills is used in small group and whole group instruction. Small group lessons involve the different components of reading including but not limited to fluency, comprehension, phonemic/phonological awareness, and word analysis. Reading running records are utilized to form flexible small groups which are changed throughout the year. Cross curricular vocabulary and writing lessons are used to ensure knowledge of content can be accessed through language arts skills.

Colonial’s math curriculum builds a strong foundation in the primary grades through a significant amount of number sense instruction. Teachers in grades kindergarten through second utilize strategies to build students’ understanding of how numbers work, not just performing mathematical processes. Manipulatives and hands-on activities are used across all grade levels to ensure students understand not only the solution, but how to reach the solution. Proving how an equation is solved is an essential part of the math instruction at all grades. Students must provide justification for their answer with appropriate math vocabulary. Calendar math is used to review grade level skills on a daily basis in all grade levels. Whole group and small group instruction, as well as math learning centers are used across the school. An online math program is used in a variety of settings to improve the automaticity of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts to assist with computation skills.

Our Science curriculum accesses a variety of materials from many different sources. Colonial Elementary offers opportunities to learn about science outside of the classroom through an after school Nature Club, a summer STEM camp, and visits from Mountain Valley Water Conservation. The Science Museum of Western Virginia provides outreach and in-museum programs, which address curriculum standards. Within the classroom, our science program focuses on using STEM activities to enhance the depth of learning of the standards provided by the state. A STEM room has been created within the school to house resources needed to complete projects. Students are encouraged to create and revise their creation as an ongoing

process during STEM projects.

Colonial teachers further students' understanding of social studies through interactive notes, literature connections, and research projects. Teachers utilize the adopted textbook to build lessons and activities. The geography curriculum provides opportunities for students to explore the 50 states through research. Field trips are used to help students make connections between the past and present. Holidays such as Veteran's Day, Presidents' Day, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day are celebrated to help students understand the impact of these historical figures on our lives today.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

"Every student needs the opportunity to explore their education in a setting outside their standard classroom environment. Encore classes give the students that space." -Colonial Staff Member

Encore classes at Colonial are comprised of library, music, physical education (P.E.), and art. Each class involves activities that inspire creative and higher-level thinking and follow the concepts of problem based learning, physical movement and self-expression. Colonial encore teachers are especially thoughtful as to ways to incorporate the core curriculum into classroom activities and plan their lessons following the Virginia Standards of Learning. All students in grades Pre-K through 5th are given access to encore classes daily, on a rotational schedule.

Our art teacher is familiar with the standards for each grade level and ensures that her lessons align with those standards for her students. Many of her primary lessons follow along with a literary piece she has read aloud at the beginning of class. Her students are then asked to predict endings to the story, before creating their artwork which is based off the literary example. For the older students, our art teacher has reinforced their knowledge of social studies concepts such as researching Native American tribes. She will carry over their understanding of the Virginia Tribes' cultures to create Native American artifacts which give the students a deeper understanding of the curriculum. Our art program supports the acquisition of skills for each student because they have the environment in which to practice social skills, refine their fine motor skills, and explore their individuality within each project.

Our P.E. teacher takes advantage of how athletics and mathematics can intertwine to align her physical activities with the student's knowledge of numbers. One such example is that during warm up, student leaders choose their exercises for the class and choose numbers to skip count while performing different exercises. Math is also used as an entrance strategy for team games. Instead of a student having to remain out, they have the opportunity to answer a math flash card in order to get back into the game. One of the students' favorite games is called Towerball, where the students are given specific instructions to build multiple towers. With the towers being of various heights, the students must estimate the height of the towers and then measure the towers using a tape measure. This kinesthetic repetition of math skills encourages our students to master fluency. Our P.E. teacher also works alongside multiple community organizations such as the American Heart Association and our local government to promote healthy living and exercise among our students and staff.

While each grade level receives reading instruction within their classroom, each student is also given the opportunity to deepen their literary understanding through our library program. Our librarian focuses on the English Virginia Standards of Learning for each grade, and encourages students to find books they would enjoy on their individual reading levels. Through her reading lessons, she also incorporates social studies, economics, computer technology, math and social skills using a variety of activities. These activities span across many mediums including being their own author and illustrator, as well as engineering and problem solving through building blocks and puzzles. Outside of the classroom, our library encourages family support and reading together by leading our school wide book fair twice a year, as well as supporting multiple parent volunteers to work in the library.

Our music program supports students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge by putting their knowledge to song. Our teacher took our Four Core Beliefs and put them to song, helping each student internalize the importance of being kind and always doing their best. He has integrated music and science

with the exploration of sound waves, as well as history through era specific music. Music continues to be an outlet for our students to express themselves on a new level.

Outside of the standard encore classes, each student is also taught social and emotional lessons by their school counselor on a monthly basis. These lessons are age appropriate and encourage healthy lifestyles within the parameters of academic, career and social-emotional development, aligned with the American School Counselor Association model.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

“All teachers and staff have demonstrated their willingness to go the extra step to help other learners, regardless of the issue.”-Colonial Elementary Parent

Colonial Elementary sets high standards for all students ensuring that the needs of diverse learners are being met. The teachers at Colonial recognize the individual strengths and weaknesses of each child and use those to drive the instruction provided. The teachers also use their own strengths and weaknesses to provide a variety of instructional strategies to engage students and keep learning exciting. We use a variety of instructional approaches such as small group instruction, differentiated instruction, problem based or inquiry based learning, and room transformation activities. Our small groups in reading and math are flexible, based on running records and other informal classroom assessments. Both ability based and flexible groups are utilized. Differentiation is provided by classroom teachers, special education teachers, the remediation specialist, and our gifted resource teacher.

Problem based learning is used in all of the content areas. It is often used as a STEM activity. These activities allow our students to think creatively and work collaboratively to solve a problem. Although we do not have a STEM Coach, our teachers work together to plan well designed STEM activities which challenge students on all levels. We have also started implementing room transformations which create highly engaging and active learning settings and experiences for our students.

The Prevention and Intervention Team, also known as the P.I.T. Crew, is a committee of teachers who provide support for other teachers and specific students. The process starts when a teacher makes a referral to the P.I.T. Crew for a student who is struggling academically, behaviorally or socially. The team of teachers observes the child and meets with the referring teacher. During this meeting, the team brainstorms strategies for the teacher to implement to support the student. Not only is this process supportive of our students, but our teachers as well. Reading running records are utilized in the beginning, middle, and end of the school year to track student progress and to form flexible reading groups. Curriculum benchmark assessments are utilized in grades 2-5 in Reading and Math. Results from these assessments are used to form small groups to work with a remediation specialist.

Students utilize an internet based program, to assess and build math computational skills. Students' fluency builds based on their performance and the program is highly engaging for students. This program is available to our students in and out of school. Each grade level has an allotted amount of time to use the remediation specialist. Grade level teams examine data from assessments to drive instruction and determine how that time is spent. Some grade levels use support in the classroom and others have a time of pull out small group instruction with the remediation specialist. Colonial uses a variety of school based resources to further support student achievement. We have a strong community volunteer program which provides support in the classroom as directed by the teacher. The gifted resource teacher uses available time in her schedule to support content area instruction in the general education classroom in addition to the time spent teaching gifted learners. The ELL teacher works with small groups of students to support their English learning. Our Instructional Technology Resource Teacher (ITRT), comes into classrooms and works with our students on using technology as well as social media/internet safety. Data notebooks have allowed students the opportunity to self-assess throughout the year. Students practice goal setting and progress monitoring to chart their progress and share these with their parents during Student Led Conferences in the fall and spring every year. Some of the areas students track are reading and math goals and progress as well as attendance, learning styles and preferences, behavior, and effort.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

“You can feel the difference when you walk in the door!”

Colonial Elementary is frequently praised for its warm, inviting, and friendly feel. Before entering the school, students are greeted with encouraging signs such as “Dream Big” and “Believe” in front of the school. Throughout our school, students are engaged by vibrant, cheerful colors and inspirational quotes. We strive to maintain a happy and positive environment where all students feel safe, loved, respected, and connected. Teachers prioritize building relationships with each student and creating a feeling of family in their classrooms. We know this sense of belonging and security is essential to support our students’ academic, social, and emotional growth. We understand that promoting students’ social and emotional growth is of the utmost importance in advancing their academic development. Our school counselor is instrumental in providing emotional and social support to our students through whole and small group activities as well as spending one on one time with individual students in need. Additionally, Colonial’s Cavalier Connection program provides support for our students while improving interpersonal skills and behavior. This mentoring program, involving area high school students (many previous Colonial students), aids our students in developing confidence and self-esteem which carries over into the classroom. We aim to engage and motivate our students from day one with a school-wide assembly. Grade levels cheer for each other as they are announced and enter the gym. Our principal excitedly greets our students and lets them know she is glad each of them is at Colonial. She leads the students in actively reciting our four core beliefs and expresses her belief in their success. Our four core beliefs form a common language for everyone at our school and motivate our students to make good choices each day. Students leave the assembly excited to begin the new school year. Colonial is beyond fortunate that our central office administration has adopted the motto “You have permission.” Having this consent to try new things, think outside the box, and simply do what we think is best for our students gives our teachers a feeling of being highly valued and trusted. Teachers at our school are fortunate to have the opportunity to attend conferences and workshops of our choosing. Furthermore, teachers at Colonial receive unwavering financial support from our PTA to purchase learning materials as well as supplies to transform our classrooms.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Building community with families is an integral part of Colonial Elementary. Before the school year begins, Colonial children and families gather on their neighborhood curbs as the school bus arrives with our “Teachers on Tour.” Teachers offer a smile, a hug, and an ice cream treat to excited students waiting at bus stops in each of our neighborhoods. In the classroom, as students work on building leadership skills, they take ownership of their academic goals in Data Notebooks, reflecting and celebrating as they share their progress with parents at Student-Led Conferences. Parents have expressed support of this work with their presence at conferences and responses on surveys. These meetings are in addition to our regular, district parent-teacher conferences. Several well-attended Colonial family evening programs include student musical performances, Family Math Night in partnership with local businesses, Colonial nights at local restaurants, and a Family Escape Classroom Challenge. School-wide book reading provides students, PreK-5, an opportunity to read with their family at home, and their school family, with follow-up discussions and trivia contests. The school connection to families is far-reaching. The Colonial PTA is a supporter extraordinaire of the staff and students. It supports the school community with special events, generous financial contributions to classrooms, and much enjoyed staff appreciation efforts. The Boosterthon is much more than our only PTA-sponsored fundraiser. It involves every student, family, and is school cheerleading at its best. Career Leadership Day gives students a face-to-face opportunity to meet and learn from local professionals including airplane pilots, dentists, K-9 police units, and veterinarians. This annual event is a day set apart for students to envision themselves as future workers and leaders, and how their work today is connected to that vision. The annual Veteran’s Day program invites families and their U.S. Veteran family members to a school-wide assembly where the students express their appreciation through photos, songs, poetry, letters, and gifts. These connections have a great impact on the students and

community. Colonial is fortunate to have been awarded matching funds from the Botetourt County Parks and Recreation Department to finance an outdoor basketball court, paved track, and two playground areas, the newest being a just-planned inclusive playground. A local church has “adopted” Colonial, providing hands to assist with beautification of our grounds, including playground-building manpower, school snacks for students who are in need, and more. A local hardware store has created and maintained an outdoor classroom complete with seating, pergola, whiteboard, and landscaped gardens.

3. Professional Development:

Our approach to professional development can be summed up with the word...support.

First, we support the Botetourt County Schools focus or initiative by providing training and collaborative discussions on the division focus. On a division level, all teachers PreK-5 participated in Orton Gillingham training over the previous year and a half. This training has provided teachers with another set of tools to use in reading instruction. Orton Gillingham has been incorporated into the already dynamic reading instruction used to meet the needs of all learners. Our division provided a unified opening with Kim Bearden, co-founder of the Ron Clark Academy, at a division wide convocation to start our school year. Teachers found this training motivating and inspiring. Ms. Bearden talked about the importance of loving students and having high expectations for all of them.

Secondly, our school’s professional development approach is based on supporting teachers individually and as an entire faculty as they grow and develop in their practice. Our school chose to start the year with a training with Mr. Thompson, author of Roadmap to Responsibility, which helps teachers foster children’s responsibility and ownership of their behavior. His session included modeling of conversations to have with students to help them develop these skills. Mr. Thompson’s presentation was aligned with our school focus of building positive relationships and leadership. In years past, teachers from Colonial Elementary have visited A.B. Combs Elementary School, the model school for “The Leader in Me.” These visits have aided teachers in the development of implementing the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People into daily instruction. Our teachers are encouraged to seek opportunities for professional development and the school and PTA provide funds to enable teachers to attend these conferences. Teachers look forward to attending the Children’s Engineering Conference which provides training in how to develop STEM activities as well as showcasing already made STEM activities which can be adapted into classrooms. Through data, teachers realized there was a need for number sense instruction. The administration provided number sense workshops on several Saturdays that were optional, yet well attended. As a result of this shift in focus on number sense, our math scores have risen to among the highest in the division.

Our school division does not mandate certain professional development areas, but gives schools the opportunity to design our own professional development plan based on our student data and faculty strengths and weaknesses.

4. School Leadership:

“There is no ‘one-leader’ at Colonial; we are all leaders.” Colonial Staff Member

Each morning we start our day with announcing birthdays, saying the pledge, and stating our school-developed Leadership Pledge. Leadership quotes line the walls and each staff member makes it a priority to look for leadership qualities in our students, even if that means we need to pull them out of some. We have learned to value leadership at Colonial due to the way our principal values demonstrating and instilling this life skill in her staff and students. Our principal has served the past five years on our division Level Special Ed Advisory Committee, the past two years on the division’s Leadership Team, as well as serves on our school level leadership team, and leads our Student Leadership Council (SLC). Our principal leads our school by setting an example and encouraging us to be our own leaders, which gives us the freedom to encourage that from our students at each grade and each ability level. There is a trust between the teachers and administration to not only get the job done, but also to have each other’s back. “We are not micromanaged, and are trusted to carry our weight and to do our jobs well, so we do,” said a Colonial Teacher. Our leadership team includes representatives from each of the following: central office, school

administration, each grade level, school counselor, and special education department. This range of school representation, as well as the permission for open discussion, gives our team the ability to hear, discuss, and make decisions which are the best fit for our school as a whole. The team reviews data to create academic plans and schedules in order to help each grade level function at their highest potential. Our students are not excluded from being leaders themselves. Our SLC consists of ten 5th grade students, as well as one member from each classroom from kindergarten-4th grades. Our SLC is included in student appropriate school-wide decisions such as playground upgrades and school spirit days. They perform duties throughout the school year including: morning announcements, assisting in school fundraisers, and serving as hosts, hostesses and the hospitality committee for our career day. Being on SLC is an honor many students take very seriously, and represent themselves well to obtain. Every student, however, is expected to be a leader in everything they do.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Grit and determination are what set our school apart and have been instrumental in our success. “I will not give up on you, and you will not give up on you,” is the consistent message students receive from teachers and staff at Colonial. Our relationships with students are strong and unconditional. No matter the behavioral challenges, learning difficulties or emotional struggles our students present, we believe in them. We believe in their potential, and with grit and determination, we work hard to find the strategy to help each individual student learn. But more importantly, we are committed to enabling each student to see their own potential and believe in themselves. Teachers work tirelessly to help each child know and understand their gifts and talents. By modeling perseverance and not giving up, we teach our students how important it is to stick with something and not give up on themselves when faced with challenges. As a result of our efforts, we see students accomplish achievements they never thought were possible, such as passing a Standards of Learning assessment for the first time or speaking successfully in front of their peers, or mastering their math facts. Our society is fast paced with a focus on instant gratification, which causes our children to expect this from learning as well. We are working hard to demonstrate to students that grit and determination will produce results even if those results are a long time coming. We know our students are learning this valuable life lesson when we see them motivated, excited and determined when given the opportunity for an SOL retake. We also see it in our students as they ask to try their physical fitness tests again to try to achieve their goal. Classroom teachers value instructional time and make heroic efforts to use each moment in a meaningful way for students. When retakes for the Standards of Learning assessments occur, Colonial has an “all hands on deck” mentality, meaning each staff member does anything and everything possible to assist with remediation for students who are participating in these retakes. Whether it involves taking other students so a teacher can remediate or using their planning time to work one on one with a student, Colonial teachers from all grade levels happily give of their time and attention to ensure all students are given the best opportunity to be successful. It is truly a team effort with everyone feeling pride no matter the outcome because we have given our personal best.