

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. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 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.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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 (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

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

78 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, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	9	9	18
K	42	38	80
1	36	43	79
2	39	43	82
3	47	32	79
4	41	49	90
5	32	38	70
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	246	252	498

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5 % Asian
 - 56 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 32 % White
 - 0 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 7%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	32
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	32
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	447
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 9%
44 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Korean, Laos, Urdu, Yoruba, Chinese, Kannada, Nepali, Farsi, Telugu, Marathi, Kirundi, Kalenjin, Swahili

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 28%
 Total number students who qualify: 141

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %
29 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>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>23</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</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: 12
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.	34
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	0
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	0

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 15:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	98%	97%	97%	98%	97%
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 2018.

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.

The mission of Eichold-Mertz Magnet School is to produce confident, curious learners who explore, experiment, and solve problems which will ensure success in the twenty-first century.

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

Since magnet schools are "schools of choice" and have a select and/or accelerated curriculum, entrance criteria have been established to help assure student success. The criterion includes academics, behavior, and attendance. There are also continuation criteria for currently enrolled students. All students must reapply during the application period and must adhere to the same entrance criteria as new students. The Pre-Screening Criteria reads as such: Entering grades 1-5, students enrolled in a MCPSS school: All grades, attendance, and behavior will be checked through INow records. Non MCPSS students entering grades 1-5: Parents will be required to submit the most current report card showing grades, conduct and attendance. If these criteria are met the student is eligible for selection. All criteria will be checked on the last teacher work day of the school year. The final report card must show final grades in all subjects, attendance, conduct, and promotion to the next grade. A form confirming attendance and behavior must also be submitted along with the report card.

PART III – SUMMARY

“Investigators: Exploring a World of Possibilities!” is the motto of Eichold-Mertz School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology. It is the educational possibilities that draw students to Eichold-Mertz. Eichold-Mertz is a school of choice, centrally located in the City of Mobile, Alabama and one mile from I-65. Due to the school’s location, and that we are not zoned as a neighborhood school, families countywide, who seek a challenging educational opportunity for their children in a safe environment, apply and are selected through a lottery. Our student population is a diverse one with students representing twenty-five countries and fifteen languages. The students’ cultural and religious backgrounds have developed into a community of understanding, respect and tolerance. Families at Eichold-Mertz represent various socioeconomic backgrounds. With the exception of the 2018-2019 school year, Eichold-Mertz has received Title-1 funding.

Eichold-Mertz Magnet School began in 1992 as Chickasaw Magnet School, a result of the Birdie Mae Davis Settlement. Originally the school had a population of 150 students in kindergarten through third grade. Chickasaw Magnet School moved to the former Clark Magnet School in 2010 to expand the school program by adding grade levels. In June of 2012, the City of Chickasaw separated from Mobile County Public Schools and the school name changed to MCPSS Magnet. Through an agreement with the City of Chickasaw, MCPSS Magnet moved to another location within Chickasaw for two years. In 2014, MCPSS Magnet was relocated within the City of Mobile and became Eichold-Mertz School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology. Currently the student population is close to 600 in pre-K through fifth grade. With Eichold-Mertz being an elementary magnet school, Mobile County Public School System does not provide transportation. In order for a student to attend, parents must provide transportation to and from school. Attendance is above the state recommend level of 97.36%.

As a school with an emphasis on mathematics, science and technology, the faculty continues the tradition of providing a challenging and engaging curriculum. Teachers are always looking for innovative and exciting curriculum that captivates students and cultivates their love of learning. By attending and facilitating professional development, completing online courses, participating in grade level meetings that examine classroom instructional delivery and conferencing across grade levels teachers have become the stake holders in the education of every child. Kindergarten through second grade become adept in phonics through the Phonics Dance. Reading comprehension has improved with Text Mapping activities, school-wide use of Flocabulary, sketch noting, and literacy centers. Math number sense and problem solving has improved with Singapore Math. All students participate in forty-five minutes of lab four days a week. These labs offer enrichment of the standards being taught in the regular classroom. Students explore math with hands-on activities in the Math Lab. The Outdoor Science Lab provides students the opportunity to incubate, hatch, and raise chickens, plant gardens, develop an appreciation for keeping the environment clean, and gain an understanding of responsible pet ownership. Students in the third grade have participated in overnight camping trips that fully immersed them in the outdoor environment and fifth grade students continue their experiences through Classroom in the Forest. The General Science Lab provides students with a place to develop a love of science through STEMscope lessons, exploring the aspects of physical science through experiments, examining the impact of our carbon footprint on the Earth, and an understanding of the systems of the human body. Students create digital media tools, research topics for social studies projects, and acquire keyboarding skills in the Technology Lab. All these activities are supported by excellent leadership from the principal to the teachers, as well as; parents, students and community members. Eichold-Mertz success has been measured by the State Department of Education report card grade of 100% for the past two years. We were the only district school to achieve this level of success; one of seven in the entire state for the 2016-2017 school year. For the 2017-2018 school year Eichold-Mertz was again recognized for academic achievement and received the grade of 100%; one of only four in the state.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Teachers at Eichold-Mertz Magnet School use College and Career Readiness Standards to design rigorous and engaging Reading/English Language Arts lessons. These lessons are created using ARI (Alabama Reading Initiative) strategies which include phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through 2nd grade, students are taught phonics using the Phonics Dance program that incorporates rhyme, movement, and chant to teach phonics. Building on phonemic awareness, students develop strong decoding skills that allows them to build fluency in reading. Literacy centers in the early grades mirror the standards being taught each week. Teachers use trade books of both fiction and/or nonfiction daily to model fluent reading, expression and expose students to new vocabulary. Vocabulary is taught in the form of word study through a schoolwide subscription to Flocabulary. It is taught through hip hop songs that target Tier 2 vocabulary words specific to each grade. Students are assessed on these units by having to apply the meanings of words. Text mapping is a technique that is used schoolwide to teach comprehension across the curriculum. The book or article that is designated for the lesson is printed and then glued side by side (left to right) to create a scroll where the entire text can be viewed at one time. Picture walks or text feature walks for nonfiction are conducted first while the text is covered to allow students to make predictions based on the illustrations or photos. The text is revealed and read aloud while students are actively participating in discussions and annotations centered on the text. Sketch noting is another comprehension technique that is used in the upper grades to take notes visually. Students use words and drawings/doodles to demonstrate understanding of the text being presented or read. These techniques become a powerful comprehension tool that students apply during independent reading and assessments. Intervention groups are formed based on classroom assessments, STAR data, DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) and Scantron Performance Series data. Intervention is based on this data and facilitated in small groups by the classroom teacher. Extra intervention is provided by our lab teachers weekly.

1b. Mathematics:

Eichold-Mertz teachers are committed to providing a strong foundation in mathematics to ensure students possess adequate skills to function as problem solvers, decision makers, and lifelong learners. Students are actively engaged in math lessons that are concrete using manipulatives that allow them to experience mathematical standards through a hands-on approach. Students communicate their mathematical thinking through pictorial representations, journal writing, and Math Talks. The primary foundation of our curriculum is Engage New York, as it is aligned with the Common Core Standards on the state and district levels. All teachers have received additional professional development in Singapore Math for both Number Sense and Model Drawing strategies and the Alabama Math Science and Technology Initiative for in-depth training of hands-on mathematical investigations. Teachers supplement their math instruction with daily Calendar Math activities and math activities acquired from Dr. Niki Newton's Guided Math training sessions.

Math instruction is adapted according to student assessment data. Student mathematical assessments include Scantron Performance Series testing twice a year, I-Ready twice a year, End of Quarter Tests, and teacher math conferences. Scantron and I-Ready provide teachers with data about students' deficiencies and advanced achievements in math. I-Ready has built in diagnostic growth monitoring assessments which individualizes lessons for increasing student achievement. Students receiving a failing grade on math tests participate in small group instruction on the standards requiring additional instructional support. Grade levels meet with the Math Lab teacher once a quarter to collaborate on classroom and lab instruction. This allows students to receive extended instruction time on difficult mathematical standards or accelerate standards beyond the grade level.

It is not uncommon to hear Eichold-Mertz students say, “I love math.” Students take on the challenging curriculum and persevere in mathematics.

1c. Science:

A hands-on, inquiry based, student led approach is how our “InvestiGators” explore science. Lab teachers and classroom teachers plan together quarterly to design lessons that transform basic classrooms into exploratory science labs where students work together collaboratively to investigate, design a model, create products, evaluate, and solve real world problems. At Eichold-Mertz, we have two science labs that students attend weekly; however, science is embedded within every part of the curriculum. The General Science Lab supports and extends the Alabama Science Course of Study through the use of the 5 E and IA (Intervention and Acceleration) models of science instruction that involves detailed and deliberate hands-on science exploration. The Outdoor Science Lab also supports and extends the Alabama Science Course of Study by engaging students in activities such as gardening, astronomy, recycling, observing and caring for school animals, and environmental education. These lessons are in addition to the science lessons taught by the regular classroom teachers. Often you will see students completing science within math, reading, and technology. This not only helps students with their problem-solving abilities, it reiterates that science is part of everything. In addition, our school has been proud to maintain an active partnership with the state’s AMSTI (Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative). AMSTI provides the teachers with lab kits that are aligned with the Alabama Course of Study, that allow students to experience hands-on science. Today’s students acquire knowledge by doing, which is why we employ the hands-on inquiry-based approach to teaching science. We have found that students can engage in scientific discussions and perform well on state assessments. Each spring our fifth-grade students are assessed in science through Scantron Performance Series and the Alabama Science State Assessment. These assessments provide teachers with valuable information about the standards students are deficient and/or excel in; this also gives us feedback about what we can do to grow as educators. We use this information to focus professional development on grade and across grade levels.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

At Eichold-Mertz, we believe that it is our duty to produce citizens who can become pioneers, explorers and leaders in our society. Our students can make intelligent choices by listening and questioning, so we embed social studies across the academic curriculum where students are asked to put on their exploring hats and view the past through the eyes of historical figures. All grade levels plan collaboratively. Beginning in kindergarten, teachers address the social studies standards using trade books, articles, PowerPoints, and videos. Students create digital projects and make presentations quarterly to demonstrate their learning. First grade teachers use thematic units to engage students in reading, history and geography. Second grade teachers supplement curriculum through the use of Discovery Education, articles, and trade books. A favorite second grade tradition is creating a “Bottle Buddy” project. This involves researching a multicultural, historical figure highlighting his or her contribution. Students create a visual depiction, research paper and make an oral presentation of the selected person. Third grade teachers supplement the social studies curriculum using Scholastic News, articles, trade books, text mapping, and sketch noting. Fourth grade teachers utilize Studies Weekly and assign projects on a quarterly basis that relate to the standards. In fifth grade, social studies involves applying mock scenarios to relate the standards in a meaningful way. Students participate in discussions that allow them to listen to different points of view before making an informed decision regarding historical outcomes. Students also use text mapping as a tool when reading articles that allows them to read with purpose and connect to the standards. In addition to curriculum standards, Eichold-Mertz is proud to honor local veterans with a program in November. This program not only honors the veterans but helps our students understand their invaluable service to our country.

1e. For secondary schools:

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:

We support the beliefs of our district and state that young children should be involved in direct, hands-on experiences with people, objects, ideas, and events. Children's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development occurs naturally when they are engaged in active learning opportunities of exploration and discovery. A classroom and auxiliary teacher facilitate child-initiated activities that promote investigation, decision-making, cooperation, persistence, and problem solving enveloped in a supportive environment that encourages their academic growth and development. We further enhance these beliefs by supporting parents with information and guidance in the development and education of their child.

Current state data supports the facts that our pre-kindergarten students are ready for kindergarten, significantly out perform their peers in reading and math, have higher attendance rates, are not as likely to require special education placement and are less likely to repeat grades.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Eichold-Mertz Magnet School of Math, Science, and Technology has several programs that support core curriculum programs in order to enhance student learning and interests.

Music is offered for one semester at Eichold-Mertz. During that semester, students in grades pre-K through fourth grade attend music class once a week for thirty minutes. These students focus on basic music skills such as note reading, creative movement, choral singing, instrument identification, the science of sound, and appropriate audience behavior. The lessons are layered so the students are able to acquire the skill easily and seamlessly, building upon what they know, applying it to real-world situations or cross-curricular situations, using their new-found skills to create music. Students eagerly anticipate our yearly Winter Program, Veterans Day, and Student Council Talent Show. In addition to this, several of our students participate in the Mobile County Honors' Choir.

We also provide a teacher led art class for forty-five minutes once a week during the opposing semester. These classes focus on hands-on student-centered art lessons for third through fifth grades. Students are instructed in using a variety of styles and mediums. Art instruction builds student confidence, creativity, focus, risk-taking, and problem-solving skills.

Pre-K through 5th grades participate in Physical Education instruction for 30 minutes a day, five days a week. The students learn through activities that will enhance skills in movement, sports, team building, rhythmic movement, manipulative, team sports, and cardiovascular health on their developmental level. Students are given the opportunity to participate in a running club with some opting to run local fun runs and 5k races. Some activities are taught through the HEAL Program (Healthy Eating Active Living), which teaches them about fitness and nutrition. Students learn about heart health through the American Heart Association's Jump Rope for Heart Program, while learning jump rope skills. Grades fourth and fifth are introduced to the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP). Instruction takes place during the school day for three weeks prior to tryouts and the archery team practice takes place two days a week after school. Students have an opportunity to participate on a competitive level in local tournaments as well as state, national, and world levels. Our goal is to help students understand the importance of living an active and healthy life.

Being a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) school, students are able to bring their electronic, Wi-Fi enabled devices from home to school. They use their devices to interact with Nearpod, participate in online activities such as Kahoot, as well as research topics discussed throughout the school day. Students in grades K-5 attend technology lab once a week for 45 minutes where they are introduced to Microsoft Office 365. Using Office 365 allows students to interact with lessons taught during the day while at home. In technology lab, students are required to research an Alabama standard-based activity, then create a digital media project. Students create three or four projects per year based on their grade level. Beginning with kindergarten, students are introduced to the parts of the computer. They work on keyboarding skills and progress to creating a PowerPoint. First through fifth grade students research Alabama State standards, then create a digital project based on their grade level.

The library media center services students in grades PreK-5th grade. The media center has both a fixed and
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flexible schedule. Students attend library class once per week and students may come to the library daily during flexible checkout time. The certified librarian facilitates Accelerated Reader and provides lessons that integrate information literacy standards and technology skills. Makerspace stations are STEM based and are located in the media center. Participation in these stations foster critical thinking, as well as provide students with the skills they need to analyze, form, and communicate ideas.

Curriculum programs that are offered to students at Eichhold-Mertz are very diverse ranging from Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, STEM Club, Dance, Robotics, Art Dabblers and InvestiGamers. The Scout programs give students an opportunity to try new things, provide service to others and build self-confidence. Our after-school STEM Club is offered in kindergarten through fifth grade. Students engage in real-world, hands-on learning experiences using science, technology, engineering, and math to develop a solution using the engineering design process. Students who take part in STEM are more likely to choose to pursue STEM in college and/or career pathways. Having an after-school dance program in the school provides opportunities to students who would otherwise not be able to participate. Students are taught Jazz and Ballet which benefits their physical development, emotional maturity, social awareness, and cognitive development. Robotics allows students to further their engineering and coding skills by completing different curriculum using Vex IQ, Sphero Edu, Lego, and Wonder Works. The Art Dabblers after school club is offered to students in grades first through fifth. In this club, students learn about and utilize various mediums to create art, foster diversity and self-expression forming a cross-grade level community and building self-esteem in the process. Our InvestiGamers Club is offered to students in second and third grades. Students strengthen problem solving strategies, increase strategic skills, build communication skills and characteristics found in the pillars of sportsmanship, fairness, honesty and perseverance.

The counseling and guidance program at Eichhold-Mertz follows the ethical and professional standards set forth by the American School Counselor Association. The counseling program consist of structured developmental experiences through classroom activities. The students participate in counseling on a weekly basis for thirty minutes. Their lessons provide developmentally appropriate materials that assist students in acquiring life skills.

3. Special Populations:

At Eichhold-Mertz, we ensure that our students have the resources and accommodations needed to access the curriculum in the least restrictive environment. Students needing additional assistance in the classroom are referred to the Problem Solving Team (PST). This team consists of grade level teachers, counselor, and the administrator. Intervention strategies are implemented in the classroom based on the student's specific needs in the areas of reading, math and/or behavior. The PST team meets regularly to discuss the student's data, success of interventions, and progress in meeting grade level standards. Interventions may be continued or changed depending on the student's progress. Those students who do not make progress with the extra assistance provided by these intervention strategies are referred for a special education evaluation. In addition to PST referrals, parents may also refer their child for testing. Students with identified disabilities receive special education services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). At minimum, the IEP team consists of a parent, general education teacher, special education teacher, and a local education agency representative. The team meets to discuss evaluation reports, progress monitoring data (STAR, I-Ready, STRIDE Academy, Scantron Performance Series, etc.), grades, work samples, student observation, parent input, and teacher input to determine the student's strengths and weaknesses. Yearly goals are established and accommodations are put in place based on the student's needs. Extra time to complete assessments, small group setting for testing, adapted paper and pencil, large print tests, magnifying equipment, and/or alternate seating are just some of the accommodations our students receive to help them access the curriculum. The teachers at Eichhold-Mertz recognize the diverse and individual needs of each student and provide valuable input in helping students be successful in the classroom. In addition to special education resource support services, some of our students also receive speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adapted physical education, or services from a vision specialist depending on the individual needs of the student. The special education service provider or speech-language pathologist collaborates with the classroom teacher throughout the school year to discuss the student's progress. The IEP team convenes at least once a year to discuss the student's progress toward meeting his/her goal and creating new goals when needed. Every three years, a reevaluation meeting is held to determine if additional

data is needed to determine continued eligibility for services.

To meet the needs of those students performing at higher levels in academic and creative fields, Eichold-Mertz has a full-time gifted specialist. Through the Child Find program, all second grade students are screened and observed as potential referrals for the gifted program. The gifted specialist communicates with the teachers to help identify referral prospects. Annual analyses of standardized tests are conducted to find additional referrals for the gifted program. Once a student qualifies for gifted services, a Gifted Education Plan (GEP) is developed. The services are provided through the Pursuing Academics, Creativity and Excellence (PACE) Program. The gifted specialist conducts pull out services as well as consultative services. Our school also has a procedure in place for grade acceleration for all grades and subjects.

Approximately 44 of our students are English Language Learners. To address the needs of these students, we have an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher who provides direct and consultative services. The teachers at Eichold-Mertz are invested in the education of all learners and work closely with one another to help each student be successful.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

After being admitted into the building by our bubbly, energetic registrar, you will first take note of the entry decor that is creatively transformed on the weekends by our talented bookkeeper. Continue into the building where kids are moving around the school and their personal classrooms, you hear student voices during instruction far more than that of their teacher. At Eichold-Mertz, we believe students should lead discussions while teachers facilitate and guide as needed. Our goal is to provide students with a safe environment where they are able to decide upon the learning strategies that work best for their individual needs. You may find students working in small groups, in the hallways, moving freely and independently to the library no matter their grade level, working as a class on scrolls, gathering eggs in the barn or working in the raised vegetable gardens. Individual core subjects are taught through a variety of methods which include project-based learning, thematic units, metacognition, hands-on, and cross curricular designs to ensure depth of knowledge to promote real-life connections.

Students maintain a high attendance rate due to the fact that they, "never know what may happen next" and they don't want to miss learning opportunities. They often describe the school as warm, helpful to everyone, respectful of all and most importantly, forgiving; explaining that there is a new opportunity every day to begin again.

The one factor that remains consistent from school year to school year, which is a significant contribution to our success, is the diligently committed school faculty and staff. You will often hear the principal meaningfully remark, "from the rootie to the tootie", we are here for the betterment of our children. Throughout four physical moves and three name changes, the faculty and staff have remained consistent and simply added numbers of personnel each year to year. Faculty and staff are described by parents as the best they have ever encountered and their travels have taken them far and wide.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our primary goal is keeping our family and community informed, thereby maintaining their status as engaged and committed stake holders in the education of our students. Before a new school year begins, meetings are held with parents of incoming kindergarteners and other newly selected students.

Parents are provided information with all summer dates and expectations such as a kindergarten and fifth grade bridging program, summer reading books and passcodes to the Stride Academy program utilized by our school. The week prior to the start of school, all families attend Meet the Teacher Night in which students bring their parents to school to register for afterschool programs, join the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and receive their school handbook and calendar.

Students and parents journey to their new classroom to meet the teacher and begin a partnership in education for the upcoming year. Inside every classroom, the teacher informs parents of guidelines, procedures and processes, provide detailed handouts for reference throughout the year and exchange points of contacts. Parents and teachers also exchange email addresses as well as sign up for other digital communication tools such as Blooms, Teams and Remind. Our primary goal is to provide families with information that they can use. Not only are classroom newsletters and homework information shared each and every Monday, but Tuesday is designated as Tuesday folder day in which communications are electronically and at times physically shared thereby streamlining the confusion of papers "stuffed into a book bag" in the rush of an afternoon.

Our Technology Teacher has single handedly supports digital avenues of communication for informing our community where they are most comfortable. This happens through the use of a digital signage board, visible to anyone who passes our busy location, a private Facebook account in which parents contact one another regarding homework, field trips and school activities, an informative school website that has been used by our school district as a model for others to follow; along with Twitter and Instagram accounts to

share photographs and tidbits of information. In addition, a vast number of our teachers maintain their own school website page, directly linked to the school's page as well as Twitter and Instagram pages to share photographs of the school day with parents.

During the school year, we have a number of events such as Fall Festival, Grits with Grandparents, Parenting Day, Student Council Talent Show, a number of Book Fairs and Tuesday Folder gatherings for parents to volunteer their support.

We have several partnerships with local businesses which include but are not limited to back to school supply drives, coffee and doughnuts for the faculty and staff, monetary donations to support the upcoming outdoor classroom site, STEM books for the library and even an entire netbook laboratory. Area high school students come in to lend support in events such as our dance recital, Fall Festival, Robotics and STEM clubs in the afternoon.

3. Professional Development:

“When you know better, do you do better,” is our mantra when it comes to professional development at Eichold-Mertz Magnet School. Many of our teachers spend their summers honing their practices, expanding their knowledge, and strengthening their skills that will directly affect their incoming students both academically and socially. As a faculty, we strive to stay on the cutting edge of our profession in order to boost student achievement, as well as improve and maintain our school’s culture and climate. Here at Eichold-Mertz not only are our students diverse, but so is our faculty. Our members each have strengths that we choose to capitalize on not only on specific grade levels but schoolwide as well. The majority of our professional development comes from within. As a faculty, we analyze data and determine where to focus our efforts to close any gaps that arise.

Over the last five years, we have taken the bull by the horns. Our students were struggling with problem solving and reasoning mathematically so with the guidance of our math lab teacher, the third through fifth grade teachers participated in a Model Drawing online class. We wanted to create a cohesive approach for our students to be able to make sense of, model and successfully solve word problems. The kindergarten through second grade teachers turned their focus to increasing number sense in order to build a foundation for our students to become mathematically proficient. Across the grade levels we have implemented the use of math journals as a tool to formatively assess and monitor growth in these specific targeted areas.

With the increasing requirements for all students to read and comprehend complex text, one of our very own set out to research, experiment and refine several reading strategies she felt would best suit our entire student body. Because of her efforts, our entire staff has had grade level and vertical training on using Text Mapping and scrolls as a pre-reading strategy. In January of 2019, Dave Middlebrook, the creator of Text Mapping, spent two days collaborating with our entire staff. Text Mapping has increased student engagement along with their ability to question, predict and infer when reading both fiction and nonfiction text. When walking the halls of our school the evidence of this professional development experience is plastered all over the walls.

4. School Leadership:

The philosophy at Eichold-Mertz Magnet is every voice matters. Leadership is a collaborative effort between the principal, faculty, students, parents, and staff. Leadership begins with the principal who sets the tone by supporting the state and district curriculum standards. The principal is extremely visible and fully believes in an open-door policy. On any given day she can be found meeting with teachers on grade level data meetings, participating in quarterly planning meeting between lab teachers and grade levels, taking an active part in science experiments, walking community leaders through our school, talking with students in the cafeteria, and working as a team member in morning and/or afternoon carline. She can be found after school attending cub scouts, dance recitals, archery tournaments, and any extracurricular activities our students are involved in. As a role model for campus expectations her main focus is on student achievement, but she has high expectation for a clean campus and a safe learning environment. Faculty members are encouraged to assume leadership positions within the school, district and state levels.

Teachers serve as mentors for student teachers from local universities and for new teachers to our campus. Teachers also participate on district and state curriculum committees throughout the year. One of the most appreciated ways teachers serve as leaders is by providing professional development not only to the staff at Eichold-Mertz, but to other schools in our district. Eichold-Mertz students also play an active role in leadership. Students can be found in leadership roles serving as peer helpers, reading buddies, assisting with morning announcements, taking an active role in community service projects, and helping with morning arrival and afternoon dismissal. Parents serve as officers in the PTO and recruit help for school activities. Support staff members lead by example by being compassionate and encouraging to our students, keeping our campus exceptionally clean, and always willing to lend a helpful hand. Everyone at Eichold-Mertz believes that when stakeholders are given leadership responsibilities they feel a sense of ownership for the school's policies, programs, relationships, and resources.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

When you walk through the doors of Eichold-Mertz you immediately feel a positive energy that continues to radiate throughout the building and beyond. Students are acknowledged by name from the principal to the cafeteria staff. A positive and safe learning environment is what students new to our school notice first. With a positive environment, teachers can hold students to higher standards and in return students proudly give teachers their best efforts. Our reputation of a positive learning atmosphere is what attracts parents to apply for our magnet program. We have become culturally diverse due in part to people spreading the word about our school within their ethnic groups. Parents know when they drop their children off in the mornings we will accept them for who they are and do our best to help them become competent and responsible members of their community. Teachers and parents encourage students to achieve high academic standards and provide the support needed to help each student achieve those goals. Sometimes that comes in the form of before or after school tutoring or in-school intervention. Sometimes it comes in the form of helping meet the immediate needs of students, whether that is clothing, supplies, or just a simple hug. When a student succeeds, we all succeed! Our students have empathy not just for their peers but for their community members. They have made a positive impact on the local community by supporting Ronald McDonald house by cooking dinners for the residents, collecting books and personal care items for children's homes, and collecting pet supplies for a local shelter. Students also support national charities by raising money for St. Jude Children's Hospital and the American Heart Association. Doing for others has made a positive impact on our students' self-worth.

Our school's hashtag #thatssomertz reveals the positive learning environment that our students are immersed in each and every day. The smiles are not only on their faces, but on ours as well as we explore a world of possibilities.