

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):
- 22 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 7 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 7 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 36 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	39	16	55
K	77	77	154
1	84	76	160
2	93	77	170
3	70	72	142
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	363	318	681

*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):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 20 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 65 % White
 - 10 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 15%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	51
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	50
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	101
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	681
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 41%
Total number students who qualify: 279

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %
111 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>10</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>15</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>36</u> Developmental Delay | <u>18</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>29</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>5</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>2</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 7
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.	35
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.	0
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 20:1

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	95%	95%	96%	95%	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 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.

Daphne Elementary School's mission is LOVE. LEARN. LEAD. As a Leader in Me School, we believe in empowering EVERYONE to live a more effective life.

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

Daphne Elementary School is one of three elementary schools in a feeder pattern of the five schools in Daphne, Alabama. The school is a Baldwin County Public School located on the Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay. Daphne Elementary has a student population which has recently grown to an all-time high of 742 students, 65% white, 20% black, 10% multi-racial, and 5% Hispanic. Baldwin County is the fastest growing county in the state and our area has become more transient due to the large apartment complexes we serve. Many students qualify for free or reduced lunch, which qualified Daphne Elementary School for Title 1 funding beginning in the 2013-14 school year. The school and community have a very diverse population based on race, religion, and socioeconomic status. With international businesses located in neighboring Mobile, the school population is expected to become more diverse in the upcoming years. The school is located in the historic section of town. Most of the new growth is occurring on the outskirts of town and students are being served by our sister school, Daphne East Elementary. Our school primarily serves one neighborhood, Lake Forest, the largest in the state.

Daphne Elementary's roots are deep within the community. Daphne Elementary's historical building was constructed in 1939. Through the years, the building has been designated as a high school, K-8, junior high school, and an elementary school. With such a deep history, many of the citizens that live along the Eastern Shore of Mobile Bay either attended Daphne Elementary or know a family that attended. Many parents and community supporters attend annual events at our school, such as the Kindergarten Mardi Gras Parade, Talent Show, Field Day, and our Educational Foundation 5k and Fun Run. When community members visit our campus, we often hear stories of how the school has changed over the years, and fond memories of their past experiences at Daphne Elementary School. The school was last remodeled in 2008 to add a new gymnasium, cafeteria, and library. We have an open campus with eight buildings. Our wooden floors and high ceilings are reminiscent of historical southern architecture, and we are proud of the character and charm of our school building. One major factor in developing our future connection with the community was the implementation of the Leader in Me process four years ago. This was a game-changer for our school. Through this process, we have discovered the need for our generation of students to feel connected with tangible "habits" for successful living. Our students, staff, and community completely embraced the idea of a common language and set character expectations. For the past four years, we have noticed a shift in the overall culture of our school to reflect that of Stephen Covey's practices of successful, empowered living.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Daphne Elementary School uses a balanced literacy approach where all children participate in the four areas of reading instruction: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The most important time in our daily reading block is small group reading because it provides students time to practice reading skills with teacher support. All classrooms use Jan Richardson's Next Steps in Guided Reading for rich, standards-based reading instruction. The Guided Reading program offers a systematic, researched based approach to reading instruction. Formative assessments, such as running records and student reading behaviors, are routinely used to guide instruction and maximize instructional time. Students begin each lesson with a sight word review, then move into a mini-lesson which emphasizes comprehension and reading strategies. Students then practice the strategies within a carefully chosen text, based on each student's individual reading level. Students then discuss their reading to check for meaning and proceed into phonics or writing instruction. The lesson concludes with an explicit sight word lesson. The guided reading instruction is paired with reading centers where students are provided opportunities to practice reading strategies independently. Other centers offer differentiated word work focusing on independent differentiated phonics practice. The guided reading approach works well for our school because it offers a balanced literacy approach, emphasizing formative assessment to guide differentiated instruction.

Summative assessments are used to track the progress of students throughout the year. Summative assessments include developmental word knowledge inventories, listening comprehension assessments and reading conference assessments. These assessment pieces are specifically designed to track students' progress. In addition, teachers participate in on-going professional development to strengthen the instruction offered through the program. Students also have access to leveled books which are cataloged and maintained by our reading coach for small group instruction or individual reading.

Throughout the year, we employ tutors for student remediation paid for with Title 1 funds. They work with students with reading intervention materials to close student reading skill gaps. Additionally, we work with professional volunteer groups, such as the Augustine Literacy Project, which provides one-on-one instruction to our most needy students. We also offer a Title 1 funded reading summer program, which is intensive one-on-one reading instruction during the summer months. Specific reading criteria is used to select students with the most deficiencies in reading.

1b. Mathematics:

Several years ago, Daphne Elementary had low mathematics scores. The school asked to be invited to the Alabama Mathematics Science Technology Initiative (AMSTI) for training. At the same time, the new Alabama College and Career Standards were being implemented. Daphne Elementary took the lead in receiving training and learning the purpose behind conceptual mathematics. In addition, Professional Learning Teams were formed to continue to study this approach. There were four areas of focus: learning and understanding the progression of academic standards, learning the mathematic practice standards, reading and implementing current research, and putting research strategies into action. These professional learning teams still operate today.

Our goal is to provide students with a conceptual understanding of mathematics prior to a procedural understanding. It is important for students to develop the ability to think conceptually first. By doing so, students are able to identify patterns and connections within math problems. They learn the "why" not just the "how." In Kindergarten and First Grade we use Investigations to build the conceptual foundation particularly in number sense. In Second and Third Grade students begin using Go Math. At this point, students begin learning procedural approaches to mathematical problems in conjunction with conceptual conversations. It is important for students to learn both the procedures as well as the reasons why they

work. This approach to instruction provides a firm foundation before students transition into the intermediate school setting.

1c. Science:

Our Baldwin County adopted science curriculum provides comprehensive inquiry-based units using the 5E model. Lessons engage students with hands-on materials and experimental activities using the scientific method. Students move through each component of the 5E model beginning with “Engage” to spark interest and activate prior knowledge. Next, the students get to “Explore” by participating in hands-on, inquiry based activities, including science labs. Students are encouraged to work in teams to solve problems as they build communication skills and learn from one another collaboratively. Formative assessments are given to monitor learning. The “Explain” component provides resources such as an on-line textbook, vocabulary cards and videos. The “Elaborate” component provides extensions, lessons at the ready should formative assessments show students need further instruction, as well as connection lessons that integrate science with English Language Arts and Mathematics standards. Finally, the students are assessed in the “Evaluate” component. Two additional expansion components, Intervention and Acceleration, are used to differentiate instruction based on students' needs. The online platform for teachers offers many resources.

In addition to our formal curriculum, many grade level field trips focus on science standards because of our proximity to Mobile Bay and the Mobile Bay Delta. Our students are given opportunities to interact with our unique local environment. Field trips include places such as The Pelican's Nest, Sea, Sand, and Stars, and Five Rivers, which all teach about our unique local habitats. Prior to field trips, students engage in project-based learning activities to provide relevance and connectivity to scientific concepts.

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

We integrate social studies throughout the curriculum and offer many opportunities to connect what is going on in our community/world to our students' lives. Our adopted standards-based curriculum consists of weekly newspapers rather than a traditional textbook, encouraging students to interact with the text. Students highlight important vocabulary, take notes in the margins, or even cut the article apart in order to organize ideas into graphic organizers which connects social studies concepts to reading standards. Each weekly newspaper includes two or more articles on the same standards-based subject. The curriculum integrates English Language Arts standards to further increase student's exposure to nonfiction text. The students enjoy the "real world" feel of receiving instruction in a newspaper-type format.

To create real-world relevancy for our children, we plan our social studies units around the cultural events of our community and state. Many of our parents serve in the armed forces, and students recognize and honor our Veterans at our annual Veteran's Day program. Children prepare writing, art, songs, and student speeches for this special event. Because we are located in the old section of town, we are within walking distance of Daphne City Hall, Public Library, Post Office, and City Museum. Teachers take advantage of opportunities for students to visit these civic entities throughout the year. Each year, students attend Daphne Public Works Day, where they learn about the many services and careers in our local government and community. Our area is rich in Mardi Gras culture, and we embrace this by holding a Mardi Gras parade each year. Kindergarten families participate with children to create costumes and floats for this special event.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

The core curriculum areas provided by Daphne Elementary Preschool Program include Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Creative Arts, Technology, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Health and Daily Living and Approaches to Learning, as are identified by the Preschool Developmental Standards of Alabama. The primary alignment of preschool and K- Grade 3 academic

standards are found within the areas of Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Technology, and Health. Indicators of School Readiness developed through preschool learning that impact student success in the primary grades is enthusiasm for learning, ability to function in a social setting, age-appropriated communication and problem solving skills, age-appropriate physical and emotional skills. School readiness skill sets and knowledge developed through the preschool experience are fostered through opportunities to promote child exploration, social ability, curiosity, creativity, decision making, independence and responsibility that serve to lay the foundation for primary grade learning. We currently have two inclusion classes and one Office of Civil Rights (OCR) pre-k. Our pre-k students are immersed in everyday school routines, including art, music, recess, library, etc. Everyone on campus is especially encouraging to our youngest school citizens and will lend a helping hand when needed.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At Daphne Elementary School all curriculum areas operate in tandem to support the unique learning needs of our students. We believe that by educating the whole child, we are tasked with supporting all areas of development, not just academic. We value the diversity of our student body and encourage all students to explore their own interests via a multitude of enrichment opportunities. Our school shines because of the mutual respect between the classroom teacher and the enrichment teacher. Staff at Daphne Elementary do not simply drop students off in an enrichment class with the intention of taking a break. Classroom teachers know that their students are immersed in and are receiving instruction in areas that will supplement the curriculum and support their goals in the classroom. Furthermore, classroom teachers and special area teachers often synergize to provide students a seamless transition between the regular classroom and the enrichment environment, whereas students learn content from the classroom teacher, acting as the expert, and receive supplemental instruction from the specialists in what is often seen as an extension of the regular classroom. All students, in grades pre-kindergarten through third grade, attend art class every other week for a total of 80 minutes per month. It is during this structured instructional time that our highly qualified teacher encourages students to develop a strong foundation in technique, style, function, and individual choice. We also offer an art club as one of the forty-five student clubs on our campus. The art club gives students more freedom to explore their interest in the subject. Furthermore, Daphne art classes provide an opportunity for students to improve critical thinking skills, self-esteem, and social skills. The instructional environment promotes opportunities for exploration and discovery, as well as cognitive, affective, sensory, and motor skill development. Students are provided opportunities to advance communication skills. They develop the ability to cooperate and explore other cultures. In this arts program, there is an emphasis on gaining fundamental knowledge and basic skills through exploration and process-oriented instruction. The art program encourages creativity and promotes the understanding and enjoyment of visual artworks. Through these artistic processes, students are afforded the opportunity to become artistically literate, inspired, and engaged lifelong learners. Student artwork is entered into several local competitions each year, as well as displayed in local businesses and civic buildings. Our music program provides all Pre-K-3rd grade students with direct instruction bi-monthly as well. The music teacher not only teaches students the foundational skills of rhythm and movement, she encourages students to find their voice and acquire the following dispositions: knowledge, skills, collaboration, flexibility, and goal setting. Our music teacher also strives to teach students respect for the ideas of others, responsible risk-taking, self-discipline, as well as creative and performing skills. Each year, DES maintains a 3rd Grade Choir which performs at many events through the school year. Our music program also encourages many of our students to display their musical talents in our talent show. Library services have a unique hybrid of fixed and flexed scheduling to allow all Pre-K-3rd grade students to visit the library for fixed classes every other week for 30 minutes, but also provides opportunities for the classroom teacher and librarian to collaborate and co-teach so that students receive instruction at their point of need. Open check-out times are available daily to all students to ensure equitable access to this resource-rich environment. Our district adopted the 1:1 technology device initiative several years ago. By affording each student a personal tool, we have essentially created an avenue to differentiate the students' learning experience because online books provide leveled opportunities to read, and students now have creative ways to collaborate, communicate, think critically, and learn at their own pace. Students benefit from learning the basic mechanics of the device in library class, while utilizing that knowledge in the classroom. Our school has three physical education teachers who teach all Pre-K-3rd grade students every day for 30 minute periods. Sportsmanship and character are the primary focus of our physical education classes. During the course of this instructional time frame, the coaches not only teach the

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basics and foundational skills required to maintain a healthy lifestyle, they also encourage students to remain physically active throughout their time at home. Lately, the physical education instructors have turned to social media to reach out to the community to encourage families to spend time doing physical activities together. This Facebook communication has provided families with unique challenges that focus on a healthy lifestyle. The culture of our school allows for specialized instruction to take place and for the same rich language to be heard in all areas of the school. It is the strong relationships among our staff that provide our students with a state-of-the-art educational experience across all curriculums.

3. Special Populations:

Daphne Elementary provides a variety of instructional methods, interventions, and assessments for students receiving special services. We start providing interventions early with our inclusive preschool program. Our program provides students with disabilities opportunities to interact and learn with nondisabled peers giving the opportunity to close achievement gaps based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. The inclusive preschool utilizes Handwriting Without Tears and Waterford Institute curriculum teaching early reading, math, science, and social studies concepts as well as executive function, creative arts, health and physical development.

Students (K-3) needing resource services for reading receive systematic instruction with Sounds Sensible (listening, phonics, rhyming, segmenting, dictation, writing) and Spire (phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension). Students needing math supports are provided targeted instruction with Bridges Intervention (numeracy, computation). Zones of Regulation is utilized for students with behavioral, emotional, or social needs. This program promotes self-regulation and emotional control. Students in the multi-disability setting are provided instruction through Attainment Company curriculum (Building with Stories, Early Literacy Skill Builder, Early Numeracy, Early Science). All students have access to sensory spaces based on Snoezelen MSE to help reduce agitation, promote calmness, encourage communication, and stimulate reactions. Students in grades 1-3 are administered the Scantron performance assessment with accommodations at the beginning, middle and end of the year to monitor progress. Utilizing various instructional methods and interventions have shown success for our special populations at Daphne Elementary. For instance, this year, the multiple disability classroom had an overall 6.8% increase in Reading Foundations scores and an overall 8.3% increase in Math scores.

Qualified English Language Learners participate in the ACCESS for ELLs assessment. ACCESS provides a yearly review of each student's listening, speaking, reading and writing skills showing improvement or continued difficulties. ESL instruction time is adjusted to meet each student's needs. The instructional focus ranges from increasing letter/sound connections and vocabulary (locating letters in print, letter/sound/picture matching games, word/picture sorts and basic vocabulary mini-books) to making connections to content taught in the classroom, increasing vocabulary and writing skills. Students participate in group and individual projects that embed standards for listening, speaking, reading and writing. This project-based learning approach allows students to work at varying levels with needed supports and helps bridge individual gaps in knowledge and skill levels. Students eligible for our gifted program participate in activities focusing on nonverbal ability and creativity through Productive Thinking activities, deductive reasoning and problem solving working with figural and verbal analogies, advanced vocabulary and creative processing with creative writing activities. Students are exposed to a variety of learning strategies, activities and curriculum topics. Individual needs are addressed by utilizing a variety of learning strategies based on the Multiple Intelligence model, Bloom's Taxonomy, and differentiation strategies.

The special services staff, along with the rest of the faculty, work closely together to help students reach their full potential. We have a high level of collaboration between special education teachers, general education teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech language pathologists to provide and adjust interventions, supports, and assessments needed to help each student succeed. All students are provided with auditory, visual, and kinesthetic teaching techniques to meet different learning styles. Most importantly, at Daphne Elementary, we surround each child with love and support to meet their individual needs academically, functionally, emotionally, and socially. Our students are thriving.

1. School Climate/Culture:

The three things that make Daphne Elementary's culture so successful and unique is our Pre-Kindergarten-3rd Grade configuration, our true diversity, and our Leader in Me process. As a Leader in Me school, we embrace the paradigm that "everyone has genius." It is embedded in our school culture to help children not only thrive academically, but discover the many talents they have as well. We do this by developing a culture of empowerment, which provides many leadership opportunities to our students throughout the year. "Never let an adult do something a kid can do," resonates throughout our school. Our school environment includes powerful quotes throughout the building which expresses everyone's worth and potential.

Specific examples of the way we empower children include, every 1st-3rd Grade student belongs to a school club based on a selection of their personal interest, such as, cooking, photography, robotics, chess, etc. Clubs are embedded during the day so that all students are afforded the opportunity to participate. Student-led events include, but not limited to, our Open House Leadership Night, literacy nights leadership breakfast and our Talent Show. The Talent Show is produced and hosted by our students and gives an opportunity for every child to share their passions.

Students are also provided opportunities for school-wide leadership roles, such as Principal Greeters, Peer Helpers, Library Assistants, Classroom Helpers, and Guest Readers. We honor students on a regular basis through our daily Shining Star student awards, monthly Kiwanis Character kid assemblies, and yearly Honors Day programs.

Daphne Elementary School maintains an Environmental Action Team that focuses on the growth and support of all teachers. The action team schedules social events away from campus, afternoon learning meetings, and professional development opportunities that stress living a balanced life. Our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is extremely active as well, scheduling events throughout the school year that supports teachers. These events include "duty free" catered luncheons, decorating the school for special events, and an array of assistance of classroom activities.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

One of the most important goals we have as a school is to use multiple pathways to engage our school families and our local community. Our newest students, incoming kindergarteners, are welcomed to campus each spring with a tour of the campus and a parent workshop. Parents are always full of questions, and by touring the campus it provides an informal setting to ease concerns and give a glimpse into the culture of our school.

The most effective pathway to engage families is by providing opportunities for parents to learn how to help their child at home and learn effective parenting skills. The past several years we have held "Parent Learning Nights" based on parent interest and surveys. Parent Math Nights began several years ago when we first learned about the new College and Career Standards. Most recently, our first grade team held a Family Literacy Night. While the parents learned about guided reading and different reading strategies to be used at home, students were engaged in hands-on literacy activities. Daphne High School Service Club provided volunteers to help with the student literacy activities. Several of the volunteers attended Daphne Elementary and were excited to come back to serve. This past month, we conducted a full-day training workshop for parents entitled, "Leading a More Empowered Life." Parents learned the principles found in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. This personal introduction to a more empowered journey was so powerful that we have scheduled several future sessions. We are fortunate to have so many parents actively involved in parent learning nights and training workshops.

Parent support and engagement is thriving at Daphne Elementary. All parents are invited to quarterly Parent Advisory Meetings. These meetings have provided much needed insight into things we can improve

on as a school. We have a phenomenal Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) who coordinates and operates large family events each year including Fall Festival and our Spring Family Dance. They also organize countless volunteers to help with events such as picture day, book fair, the talent show, Teacher Appreciation, duty free lunch for teachers and honors programs. PTO just funded a new digital sign for the front of the school to keep our parents and community informed of school events. Their service efforts to raise funds also placed two new playgrounds for students to enjoy.

We actively engage our local community. We have a strong relationship with the Daphne Beautification Committee which coordinates major on-going campus beautification projects. Bryant Bank, a local business, funded our new outdoor classroom. The LifeSouth Blood Donation bus visits our school and we encourage parents and community members to donate blood. University of Mobile students also visit our campus each year to volunteer their time.

3. Professional Development:

Baldwin County Public Schools support reading, mathematics, character development, and student technology development in our classrooms. We enjoy site-based management with tremendous central office support. Daphne Elementary School teachers take pride in their profession by participating in development opportunities provided locally and throughout the state. At the school level, we receive on-going professional development in guided reading, interactive writing, Leader in Me, curriculum mapping, and mathematics. At the county level, we have teachers involved in eMints (interactive technology teaching), guided reading professional learning teams, and curriculum mapping/pacing. We have several teachers currently working to obtain advanced certifications and National Board Certification.

Our professional development is systematic. Four years ago, our district learned about guided reading and trained principals and administrators in the components of guided reading. Administrators formed a professional learning team called a "cadre" for a deeper study of guided reading components. The following year, each school nominated teachers on each grade level to be trained for six full days in guided reading teaching strategies and components. The following year the cadre continued to develop their learning while district school-based reading coaches used the coaching cycle to develop their instruction at school level. Each year a new cadre of teachers has begun the same training. In four years, we have developed three cadres so that teachers are saturated with the implementation of guided reading. At the school level, administrators know what to look for in high-quality small group reading and we sustain development of teachers with monthly curriculum planning with reading coaches. This same systematic approach of training is mimicked with other professional development initiatives until a level of concept saturation has occurred within the faculty.

4. School Leadership:

Our leadership philosophy is "leadership is unlocking people's potential to become better." Through the years, administrators have learned to step aside and allow for teachers, parents, and community members to contribute to our school culture based on what they are intrinsically passionate about. The school is structured with a Lighthouse Team, which also serves as a school improvement team. The Lighthouse Team members each facilitate an Action Team. The Action Teams create their agenda of improvement based on a paradigm continuum (See-Do-Get model) of A. identifying their current paradigm about the need for an improvement (see) B. create step-by-step process for improvement (do) and C. analyze the results of their efforts (get). One such team focuses on academic growth. A clear example of this leadership model is our Student Achievement Action Team wanted to see better results with student Scantron scores by the end of the school year. The entire school made a wildly important goal (W.I.G.) regarding increasing reading and math scores by 3%. This goal filtered down to the individual student. Each student tracks their individual WIG in their leadership notebook. The goal is reviewed in two areas: 1. increasing their Guided Reading level and 2. increasing their gain report through state Scantron testing. Individual classrooms create lead measures to help children achieve their goals. Students, parents, and teachers are all innovative leaders, and we are proud of our circle of influence and accomplishments in many local and state organization.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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Our faculty began to change when we first had The Leader in Me 7 Habits training five years ago. It changed the culture by changing the way we "do things around here." The faculty developed a very personal, deeper understanding of the idea that we are a product of our own choices and decisions, and we have the power to choose our own happiness. Trust among our faculty was developed to an unprecedented level during that time. The one practice that has been instrumental to our success has been intentionally continuing to train our faculty, staff, parents, and students in the leadership practices of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.

A few weeks ago, parents were invited to a full day of training based on living a more empowered life. Thirty-five parents received an intense, self-reflective one day training of examining their life and understanding how to create positive change. Last year, a team of teachers taught several groups of parents about leading a more effective family through seven night sessions which focused on developing family relationships. Through the years, we have held several events that have invited parents and community members to come learn about leadership, tour classrooms, and take the time to LISTEN to children. We have taken children to Daphne City Council Meetings, honors assemblies, and public events to speak and share about the habits. Daphne Elementary has been a leadership symposium school, meaning we have trained teachers from other schools on the habits. We have provided community training through our Chamber of Commerce meetings, community task force leadership meetings, and have presented/trained in many local LEA and state professional development opportunities. Our community speaks the same leadership language now. Academic success is a result of our empowered culture. Teachers review data, set academic growth goals with every student, and celebrate growth as a win-win with every child. When everyone understands the culture of the school, TRUST develops because RELATIONSHIPS develop. Our school's influence has grown far beyond the walls of our school as our community has embraced the idea of living a more empowered life. Our effectiveness to constantly train and retrain students, staff, parents, and community is the one practice most instrumental to our success.