

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Tracy Novack

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

Official School Name West Park Place Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 193 West Park Place

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

Newark DE 19711-4520  
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County New Castle

Telephone (302) 454-2290

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E-mail tracy.novack@christina.k12.de.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. Richard Gregg E-mail richard.gregg@christina.k12.de.us  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Christina School District Tel. (302) 552-2600

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 Dr. Meredith Griffin Jr.  
(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

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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

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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):
- 18 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 3 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 25 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	0	0	0
K	23	25	48
1	30	31	61
2	32	31	63
3	22	36	58
4	28	34	62
5	24	22	46
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
<b>Total Students</b>	159	179	338

\*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
  - 16 % Asian
  - 20 % Black or African American
  - 13 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 42 % 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 2017 – 2018 school year: 16%

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

The University of Delaware has many scholars from around the world. Being located in the City of Newark and walking distance from the University of Delaware, many of our students have parents who study at the University. Some scholars are here for a semester and some longer. Hence the student turnover rate is higher than 15%.

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	29
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	28
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	57
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	351
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.16
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	16

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 17%  
57 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Creole, Gujarati, Hindi, Indonesia, Kannada, Pashto/Northern, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 56%  
Total number students who qualify: 188

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %  
38 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>0</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>6</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>19</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	16
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., school 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.

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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. 2011

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Our Mission at West Park Place is to nurture a partnership within our learning community where we develop a safe learning environment and a family of enthusiastic autonomous leaders who reach their highest level of academic achievement. We are dedicated to a comprehensive plan that empowers all students to actively participate in attaining these goals to become life-long learners and productive members of society.

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**

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West Park Place Elementary School has a place of pride in a diverse community in the city of Newark, Delaware. It has stood as a bulwark of cultural and societal changes throughout its 65-year history, and has maintained its commitment of acceptance and academic excellence for generations of students.

West Park Place is a unique institution within the Christina School District, as well as the State of Delaware. Due to our proximity to the University of Delaware, and especially its English Language Institute, we receive a large influx of students recently arrived to the U.S. throughout the year, many of whom are high need. This makes West Park Place a leader in helping immigrant children succeed in school. Likewise, West Park Place is also the home of two classrooms from the Delaware Autism Program (DAP). Students in our DAP program receive specialized instruction and supports in a separate environment, but are integrated with their peers during expressive arts instruction, lunch and other academic areas, as appropriate. As such, we foster a welcoming atmosphere to all students and ensure that our diverse population has access to all resources available at West Park Place.

Driven by our mission, West Park Place is committed to ensuring that all students have a fair and equal opportunity to obtain high-quality education by providing both quality instruction and experiences to our students. High expectations are held for all students and the Delaware Department of Education has recognized West Park Place as a SUPERIOR school since 2003, the inauguration of the Delaware Student Testing Program. Additionally, just this year, West Park Place received the 2018 Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Distinguished School Award. Our instructional programs are aligned with the Common Core State Standards where instruction is data driven and differentiated to meet the needs of our diverse learners while maintaining academic rigor. This commitment to excellence extends to our staff, many of whom hold master's degrees, by them having the initiative to continually focus on improving their performance and instruction via reflection, collaboration and inquiry by means of Professional Learning Communities.

As a means to build character, we encourage our students to become involved in extracurricular and community activities. We offer many opportunities for students to participate in clubs and activities such as Drama Club, Art Club, Library Club, and Book Club. Likewise, West Park Place also participates in Lego League competitions, Odyssey of the Mind competitions and Science Fairs. Another activity is Girls on the Run, where every participant is encouraged to fulfill their dreams and potential via discussions, teamwork, and exercise. Additionally, our students both participate in and are recipients of food drives and the Sharing and Caring Program, which provides clothing, toys and essential household goods to families in need. As a community service project, West Park Place partnered with the ECC, Exceptional Care for Children, which provides transitional, long term and palliative care to medically fragile and technology dependent children. This partnership involved a year long, multi-stage project involving visits to the ECC, the creation of a book for a “buddy”, a card for a “buddy”, as well as participation in a drive for much needed items and a fundraising event, all of which developed our students’ compassion and connectedness to the greater world.

Another aspect of our commitment to excellence is our participation in the Positive Behavior Support Program (PBS). Positive Behavior Support fosters respect, responsibility and accountability in students that enhances our school culture. Our universal goals include demonstrating “PREPARED, PRODUCTIVE, and POSITIVE” behavior in all aspects of our school. It incorporates proactive, positive (non-punitive) techniques by rewarding students for “doing the right thing”. Students can use earned tickets to buy items from our school store and to participate in PBS activities, such as bowling trips and ice cream sundae parties.

At West Park Place, we recognize parental involvement as an important facet of quality education. As a result, there are many opportunities for parents to participate in their child’s education. We demonstrate our commitment to parental involvement by maintaining regular communication with parents by email, internet groups, newsletters, bulletin board postings and news blasts via our telephone messaging system. We also validate that parents are partners in education by regularly communicating student progress and by providing opportunities for parents to conference with teachers and our school principal. Another way we

demonstrate our belief that parents are partners in education is by providing opportunities for parents to volunteer at the school. Parents volunteer in classrooms, during fundraisers, afterschool programs, and special programs like our annual Multicultural Night and the Harvest Dance, as well serving as chaperones on field trips.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is an integral part of the West Park Place family. We work in collaboration with PTA in order to ensure our school is an environment that meets the needs of all students. The PTA has an extensive and robust history at West Park, and membership is strongly encouraged for parents and teachers alike. The West Park PTA has been instrumental in the implementation of evening school programs including Math and Science Night, which this year includes an author of non-fiction children books, and Art Night where they fund an ice sculpting demonstration. Additionally, PTA provides financial assistance to families who need support in paying for school trips. The PTA is committed to inspiring our teaching staff and created the Teacher Initiative Grant that has given thousands of dollars to our teachers for many initiatives including classroom pets, technology for ESL students and kindergarten handwriting programs.

In short, West Park Place Elementary is committed to creating a diverse community that affirms and accepts the full identities of all people, while inspiring academic excellence and a desire to build a more just and equitable world.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

West Park Place aligns instruction to meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA). Foundational Skills, Speaking & Listening, and Language Standards are taught explicitly throughout the year as determined by formative and summative assessments. In the lower grades, K-2, whole group time may be used to introduce new concepts. However, in depth work is done during small group instruction according to need. In the upper grades, 3-5, phonics deficiencies are addressed during small group. Teachers provide daily needs-based instruction to flexible groups. Individual student needs are determined by various diagnostic tools.

The basis of our ELA program is to use a stairway of complexity for what all students need to be able to be productive in what they read and comprehend. Instruction encompasses lessons for the 5 areas of ELA: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Language and Media, and Technology. We teach with diverse texts, both fiction and non-fiction, that are challenging and high interest. Lessons incorporate skills and strategies to draw conclusions and identify specific evidence attained through listening and speaking. During instruction, students build knowledge, explore possibilities, and gain insight and perspective. We use the Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative on a daily basis. This tiered instructional process has had a positive impact on student achievement, conceptual understanding, and skill acquisition. Students are grouped by need and therefore instructed on what will benefit the individual most. Data is re-evaluated every 6 weeks and drives instruction in the classroom. We analyze iReady scores and district generated standards based assessments to analyze, direct, and improve classroom instruction and student achievement. Each assessment question is broken down by standard to easily determine the instructional needs of the students. Assessments are both written and computer based.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

West Park Place Elementary, as part of Christina School District, is in the second year of implementation of a new program. Classroom instruction is rigorous, coherent, engaging, and accessible to all learners. The standards are weaved together for content and practice in ways that support student learning by encouraging students to explore, develop, test, discuss, and apply ideas. Visual models are displayed to deepen students' mathematical learning while engaging with mathematical content. The focus is on developing students' deep understandings of mathematical concepts, proficiency with key skills, and reasoning abilities through age appropriate problems and investigations in the areas of number, operations, algebraic thinking, measurement, data, and geometry. The mathematical classroom features a combination of whole group, small group, and independent activities that are problem centered.

At least 80 minutes a day are set aside for math instruction, 20 minutes of which is devoted to Number Corner. Number Corner is a skills program that is a collection of quick daily activities which uses the calendar and a record sheet for data collection. The display engages students and contributes to a math-rich classroom environment that promotes both procedural fluency and conceptual understanding. During Number Corner, standards are both introduced prior to instruction in the core math lessons and also reviewed. Having the daily skills practice provides numerous opportunities for students to practice standards. Assessments are woven into daily lessons through teacher observation, check points, work samples, and unit assessments. Teachers record assessment data into excel spreadsheets to analyze and prepare for intervention or small group instruction. The curriculum intervention program is used along with Dreambox, an online math intervention program, and core instructional materials to support students who need extra support in mathematics.

#### **1c. Science:**

In the area of science, West Park Place aligns with the Christina School District and State of Delaware via implementation of the Delaware Science Coalition elementary science curriculum. The elementary science curriculum consists of materials supplied by the Coalition for students to engage in hands on investigations in response to observable scientific phenomenon. With West Park Place teacher support, students are encouraged to ask questions and take ownership of their own scientific inquiry, which leads to a deeper understanding of scientific concepts. This is the goal of NextGen (NGSS).

Inherent in NextGen, students of all ability levels participate in science. With teacher support and encouragement, students who may typically struggle in ELA and/or math are frequently found to generate astute scientific questions when observing phenomena because implementation of NGSS has provided a level playing field alongside their peers. West Park Place enhances the science curriculum via Mystery Science, a technology-based supplemental curriculum. Mystery Science provides additional resources, both in the form of NGSS standards that the Coalition kits may not fully support yet, as well as videos to demonstrate more abstract phenomena that can be difficult to replicate in the classroom. The multimedia available from Mystery Science brings abstract concepts to life for students who are still rooted in concrete learning.

West Park Place teachers have begun the transition to NextGen assessment practices. Teachers currently have access to a bank of CERs (Claim, Evidence, Reasoning) for formative assessments on the Science Schoology site, in addition to the state's Formative Assessment bank. Additionally, fifth grade students participate in the state DeSSA Science Assessment. This is the first year that DeSSA scores will be "live", therefore, it will provide a baseline which West Park Place will continue to use in the future to analyze and inform science instruction.

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

West Park Place, as part of Christina School District, utilizes the District's elementary social studies program to deliver well-balanced daily lessons that are aligned with Delaware's standards. Throughout the year students participate in a wide range of activities that teach concepts in civics, economics, geography, and history. Each grade level follows a curriculum map that highlights the required units of instruction. The strands are divided up between the four marking periods for grades K-5. Civics in marking period 1, geography in marking period 2, history in marking period 3, and economics in marking period 4. The units combine lessons from the district's required curriculum units with the Delaware Recommended Curriculum Units (DRC). The DRC units have undergone rigorous peer reviews to ensure alignment to Delaware Content Standards. Lessons address the Delaware Content Standards and implement Common Core Reading and Writing Standards. Assessments include formative assessment "checks for understanding" throughout the unit and a summative transfer task. Transfer tasks require students to apply the concepts within the unit to a new task. Two examples of transfer tasks are writing a speech to demonstrate conceptual understanding of the bill of rights and creating a travel brochure about different landforms in the United States. Assessment data is analyzed in professional learning communities (PLC) to determine additional supports needed for particular students and to determine if modifications are needed to instructional units to improve instruction. Technology is used to enhance instruction which includes but is not limited to research, activating strategies, multimedia demonstrations to build background, and interactive websites. Various instructional methods, such as problem based learning, are woven into daily lessons. Through literature, children explore the many themes of social studies. It's through rich text that students learn about their own culture, cultures around the world, geography, history, the local community, and more.

#### **1e. For secondary schools:**

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

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

The arts are alive and well at West Park Place, taught through a dedicated and effective staff that know their subject. The arts are integral in all children's development, because through them students create, design, plan, and invent. It is easy to incorporate and integrate the core subject areas with the arts because students can connect math, reading, writing, science, and history to their projects.

In accordance with all of the updated national, state, and district visual and performing arts standards, our programs engage students in fun and interesting project based lessons. Students create and complete artistic works of art. Through presentations, students analyze, interpret, and select artistic work to exhibit/share. Through cross-curricular connections, students relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Our students participate in weekly music and art classes from kindergarten to fifth grade. One common goal is to teach students how to work in teams and be creative. Another goal is to inspire students to use music and art both inside and outside of the classroom. In the music curriculum, students have opportunities to play instruments, such as recorders and rhythm sticks. In fifth grade, students have the option to play a band or string instrument during a weekly lesson. Fourth and fifth graders have the option to be in chorus which meets once a week. These classes help students learn the importance of creating music as a unit. We perform two concerts during the school year to demonstrate student learning in chorus, strings, and band.

Students also attend a physical education class on a weekly basis. The goal is to facilitate learned knowledge through activities to strike a balance of students understanding physical fitness and cardiovascular fitness. Students learn about how different physical activities, behaviors, and forms of exercise effects their own bodies. Due to high levels of inactivity, Delaware children put themselves at high risk of health problems because of the increased use of electronic media. Key findings from the 2014 Delaware Survey of Children's Health found that 21% of Delaware children, ages 2-17, were obese in 2014. Elementary aged children need approximately 30-60 minutes of exercise every day. Thus, it is recommended that students learn more about their bodies, so that they can make educated choices. We intend for our students to leave with enough general knowledge to make educated decisions about their own health and standards of living. It is our hope that each child adopts a healthy lifestyle.

At the West Park Place library, we have books on a wide range of subjects and genres. Each class goes to the library at least once a week. There they receive a lesson about the library, reading, and/or computer skills, then are able to check out books. The students use their library books for assignments, research, information, and for the pleasure of reading. Twenty computers are located in the library where the students learn how to use our online circulation system, access educational databases, and utilize research skills. In addition, we offer the 500 Book Challenge which encourages the students to read. They receive a book for each hundred books read and are invited to a party at the end of the year to celebrate their achievement.

Students in all grades have access to counseling. Each homeroom has counseling for 9 weeks during the school year. The counselor uses children's literature to engage in conversations around social and emotional learning. Counseling also includes individual or group counseling. Many of the activities focus on helping students learn ways to build positive social skills, gain confidence in their ability to interact with others, and learn ways to deal with problems or conflicts constructively. Small group counseling takes place one day per week for six weeks and focuses on a specific topic, such as bullying prevention, positive school behaviors, and making and keeping friends. Small group counseling enables participating students to be academically and socially successful at West Park Place.

## **3. Special Populations:**

West Park Place has a highly diverse student population. We understand and value our students' unique personalities, characteristics, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles. To celebrate and encourage each individual's autonomy, we vary our teaching methods in ways that will best maximize our students' potential through differentiated instruction. Differentiating instruction allows us to address student learning characteristics more appropriately and productively. An example of differentiated instruction is to assess our

students' learning styles, and then design lessons based on those surveys. We also tailor lessons to specific areas of student interest, therefore generating more genuine engagement and understanding of a particular topic.

For our advanced academic placement (AAP) students, we change the pace of learning, progressing quickly through content and delving deeply into specific topics. We also utilize curriculum compacting, open-ended activities, and higher-level questioning. AAP students participate in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) challenges and competitions that encourage problem solving skills, instill creativity, and allow for authentic learning experiences.

When teaching below grade level students, who often include students with disabilities, instruction is personalized so that students work towards their own specific goals and objectives. For example, students with disabilities know their individual academic and behavioral goals and are continually informed of their progress toward targets, utilizing visual aids such as graphs and charts. Providing activities that are engaging, motivating, and meaningful is critical for struggling students. Multisensory instruction is often used for struggling learners. This method allows them to use what they see, what they hear, how they move, and what they feel to better remember the material being learned.

English Language Learners (ELLs) represent 16% of the student population at West Park Place. Our ELL students are instructed by an ELL teacher in order to receive focused instruction in social and instructional language, vocabulary, communication, and content specific language. This service is differentiated by utilizing English proficiency test scores to group students and target instruction for meaningful access to the standards and equal educational opportunities. The grouping is flexible allowing students to move as they grow and advance, with the ultimate goal being their successful integration, both academically and socially, into the mainstream classroom and the greater school community.

We utilize informal, formal, objective, and subjective assessment techniques. Informal assessments, such as performance-based and portfolio assessments, are particularly important for students who are performing below or above grade level, English language students, and students with disabilities. By using these types of evaluations we target specific problem areas and adapt instruction. Some examples of the assessments used include presentations, scoring rubrics, observation checklists, educational games, role play, debates, and reading aloud. Continually assessing and adjusting lesson content to meet students' needs is extremely important in reaching learners of all abilities. Self-assessment is utilized because it is vital that they have an opportunity to be a part of the process. Often students set their own goals to achieve and then monitor their progress towards those self-selected goals.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Being a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) school supports West Park Place in promoting a warm environment throughout the school. Staff members continually recognize students for demonstrating prepared, positive, and productive (PPP) behavior. Students are celebrated during school-wide events and at the classroom level. Teachers have individualized reward systems that encourage and celebrate students making positive choices. Teachers have the flexibility to choose how students can cash-in what they have earned individually and as a group. Students from each grade level are also recognized weekly over the announcements for displaying PPP behavior. Appropriate evolves from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. There are monthly school spirit days where students and staff demonstrate their West Park Place pride. We also have monthly events where students use their tickets to attend like bowling trips, an ice cream party, roller skating, and ice skating.

Respect is of the utmost importance at West Park Place because being in a bully free environment creates a culture of safety and freedom for students to learn and be themselves. We do our best to meet students' social, emotional, and physical needs so they can focus on learning. When students are having a crisis, we use restorative practices to get them reengaged in learning. Our counselor meets with different groups weekly for a variety of reasons, including a grief group. The redirection staff member also supports students in crisis until they can return to their classroom.

Our Response to Intervention (RtI) team helps teachers choose action steps to meet students' behavioral or academic needs. The team helps analyze data and develop ideas to reach students in alternative ways. Some behavioral interventions include check ins and outs with a staff member, a self-manager, and a designated classroom area for students to deescalate. Representatives from each grade level are on the team to ensure multiple perspectives and increase awareness/familiarity with struggling students.

Teachers feel valued and supported at West Park Place by receiving support from team members concerning curriculum, student data, and feedback about students. Teachers communicate across grade levels for ideas and activities to engage students. Having an open relationship with administration is critical to a teacher's sense of value. Our teachers go to the administrators for support with students, families, curriculum, feedback, and concerns. With an open door policy, teachers feel supported and encouraged. They feel that the principal trusts them to do their job, but will give honest feedback that allows them to reflect on their effectiveness and gives them the opportunity to improve and become better practitioners.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

At West Park Place, one strategy is to have an open line of communication between the school and community members and between teachers and families. At the school level, parents and the local community are kept up to date about activities, events, and any other information through the website and monthly school newsletters. On a weekly basis, the principal creates a parent link which is sent directly to families via phone and email with reminders of upcoming events. At the classroom level, teachers communicate with parents through agendas, daily folders, email, phone calls, conferences, report cards, interims, and progress reports. Families are actively involved in developing 504 and IEP plans for students with needs.

Another strategy that has been successful is the relationship with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The PTA sponsors numerous activities both at the classroom and school-wide level. For example, the PTA gives teachers stipends for both field trips and educational resources on a yearly basis. School representatives attend the PTA meetings to make sure that stakeholders are involved and representing both sides. We have a walkathon every spring as a fundraiser for the PTA.

One community activity is mentoring. We use community mentors who come in every Friday to work one on one with second and third grade students who have challenges in reading. We have numerous after

school activities and events for the school community including math and science night, art night, literacy night, and multicultural night. Every year we have student teachers and mentor students from the local universities working with classroom teachers.

As a community service project, West Park Place partnered with the ECC, Exceptional Care for Children, which provides transitional, long term, and palliative care to medically fragile and technology dependent children. This partnership involved a year long, multi-stage project involving visits to the ECC, the creation of a book for a “buddy”, a card for a “buddy”, as well as participation in a drive for much needed items and a fundraising event, all of which developed our students’ compassion and connectedness to the greater world.

### **3. Professional Development:**

Professional development (PD) is critical to ensure that teachers are constantly evolving, growing, and strengthen their pedagogy. PD opportunities enable teachers of all subjects and paraeducators to work together so the entire school staff is knowledgeable and up to date on school initiatives.

West Park Place balances the use of our school data to drive our PD choices with PD based on district and state initiatives. Teacher leaders are sent as school representatives to district and state PDs to keep us informed about current and future initiatives or programs. When choosing PD based on instructional practices, West Park Place uses data to determine areas that demand immediate attention and areas with room for improvement. The school also uses feedback and ideas from staff members to inform PD decisions. The school then looks for future PD opportunities from the state or district that might meet our needs. West Park Place also coordinates and arranges PD with district leaders and coaches. When a teacher attends PD, he or she will share information and takeaways with the staff during a staff meeting, PD day, or professional learning community meetings (PLCs). The principal looks for implementation of concepts, ideas, and strategies from PD in classrooms and provides teachers with feedback. The principal and school leadership develop a comprehensive implementation plan for long range professional development initiatives, such as the Leader in Me program by Covey.

When new curriculum is introduced, the school district provides schools with support, physical resources for implementation, and professional development centered on the curriculum as part of a multi-year PD plan. For example, most recently with our new math curriculum, Bridges, the first year encompassed monthly PLC meetings focused on upcoming math units. There were four district wide, grade level PD s with Bridges experts where teachers walked through 2 upcoming units at a time to prepare for instruction. The second year PD has been more focused on providing teachers with school centered PDs that allow teachers to analyze data, prepare for instruction, and gives time to hone in on their craft. Additionally PD opportunities were offered for new teachers, at district or grade level, and teachers who requested additional support. Another recent PD with the Newark police centered around school safety, which is a priority for every school today. Classrooms are safer when teachers are adequately trained with techniques and role play scenarios.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The leadership philosophy at West Park Place begins with the core belief that every person in the school is a leader. Teachers and staff must foster leadership qualities and characteristics within the school membership by developing each individual’s potential. Coming from a place of leadership involves a sense of empowerment and choice. Staff members lead professional development on areas of their interest or expertise. Teacher leaders create student leaders by having students take ownership and accountability over their own learning. That in turn leads to increased engagement, effort, and interest in success which positively impacts student achievement.

The principal is the embodiment of the school vision. As a leader, the principal gives teachers a direction and focus for the week through a weekly newsletter. As leaders of the classroom, teachers have the freedom to make decisions within the scope of district and school expectations. Teachers have the opportunity to take leadership roles within the school such as leading school committee. Content area teacher leaders

attend monthly meetings with district content chairs and provide PD to staff at West Park Place. Each grade level is represented by a team leader who coordinates weekly PLCs, attends monthly meetings with school administration, and is the primary source to disseminate information to team members. To build leadership, team leaders delegate roles to team members so that action items are addressed and each team member is accountable. Team leaders meet in the summer to coordinate school schedules for the following year and make decisions that maximize learning. Even students have leadership roles that they utilize in the classroom and school-wide. For example, fourth grade students facilitate learning groups with first graders for a variety of concepts including geometry, geography, and science. Fifth grade students lead school-wide activities that involve social awareness and community service programs. Recently they coordinated a collection for Down Syndrome Awareness day. They collected money and delivered socks for “Rock Your Socks” day.

As leaders, staff and other stakeholders are involved in decision making processes to ensure that varied perspectives are represented and addressed. When school funds are available through grants, Title I, or educational awards, staff members submit ideas for how funds may be utilized to improve student achievement. Staff members have the opportunity to converse and come to a consensus regarding which idea will have the greatest impact on student achievement. Within the last year, the school team decided to invest in the Leader in Me program.

## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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West Park Places’s most instrumental practice is our technology integration which has helped narrow achievement gaps, make abstract concepts more accessible for students, increase student engagement, and create more individualized learning opportunities. Instructional technology use has been the most effective way to bridge the opportunity gap between students from different socioeconomic statuses and thus increase achievement in ways that were previously impossible. Our technology includes: a Smartboard, 3 desktops, and a Document Camera per classroom; 30 desktops in the lab and library; 100 student laptops; 30 traveling iPads; and one-to-one iPads in 5th grade. Every student uses technology daily to enhance instruction.

One online intervention program has drastically improved math achievement. Our effective, daily use of the program at home and school, has increased conceptual understanding and skill building. It teaches and reviews concepts through tailored and individualized games selected based on ability. Once a game is mastered, a new concept is introduced. Struggling students continue to work on challenging topics and advanced students learn concepts 3 grades above. Teachers use data from the program and classroom assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses and assign online lessons accordingly. We have found a correlation between the number of online lessons completed and increased achievement on iReady (a diagnostic adaptive assessment) and increased achievement and attainment in class. Technology has made the implementation of this online program possible.

Through technology, students access thousands of free eBooks on EPIC- a reading application. Teachers register students and they have free access to an unlimited number of texts at school. Comprehension and vocabulary skills improve when students read a wide variety of complex texts, which EPIC provides. Through EPIC, students can read texts in different languages, from hundreds of different topics/categories, with increased complexity, and supports if needed. Technology has increased our students’ ability to conduct up-to-date research unavailable in print and to comprehend challenging technical and scientific texts. Students are more prepared for real life by conducting research and synthesizing the information they learned. The CCSS listening/speaking and multimedia standards are addressed by students creating presentations on Keynote, PowerPoint, or Prezi’s. Apprehensive students present slides from the front of the room, but can now pre-record the accompanying speech and avoid anxiety. This all leads to greater ELA achievement.

Teachers can build background knowledge and make abstract concepts more concrete in ways that were unfathomable 10 years ago. Students have distant experiences like flying over the Everglades, the Serengeti, or Grand Canyon to activate and build prior knowledge. The Great Pyramids come alive through 3-D recreations. Multimedia integration makes learning more memorable, powerful, and relatable. Effective technology use increases achievement in every content area. School-wide technology integration is the “it factor” for West Park Place. As state tests have become increasingly more demanding and difficult, our students have continued to excel, because our technology integration and instructional technology use has increasingly pushed the limits of learning.