

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Karen Carstens

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

Official School Name Tritt Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4435 Post Oak Tritt Road

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

Marietta GA 30062-5622
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cobb

Telephone (770) 642-5630

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Web site/URL https://www.trittelementary.com/

E-mail Karen.Carstens@cobbk12.org

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. Chris Ragsdale

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail Chris.Ragsdale@cobbk12.org

District Name Cobb County Schools District Tel. (770) 426-3300

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 Mr. David Chastain

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. 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

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
 - 68 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 25 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 18 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools

112 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
 - Urban or large central city
 - Suburban
 - Rural or small city/town
- 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 | 71 | 62 | 133 |
| 1 | 66 | 60 | 126 |
| 2 | 86 | 74 | 160 |
| 3 | 79 | 79 | 158 |
| 4 | 69 | 67 | 136 |
| 5 | 87 | 81 | 168 |
| 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 | 458 | 423 | 881 |

*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
 - 6 % Asian
 - 4 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 81 % White
 - 4 % 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: 2%

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 | 18 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year | 4 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 22 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017 | 881 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.02 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 2 |

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4%
39 Total number ELL

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

Bosnian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Farsi, French, German, Gujarati, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3%
 Total number students who qualify: 26

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %
120 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>19</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>1</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>23</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>27</u> Developmental Delay | <u>47</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>93</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</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:

| | Number of Staff |
|--|------------------------|
| Administrators | 4 |
| Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher. | 40 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc. | 23 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 13 |
| Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 4 |

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

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

| Required Information | 2017-2018 | 2016-2017 | 2015-2016 | 2014-2015 | 2013-2014 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance | 98% | 93% | 94% | 93% | 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. 2013

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

One Team, One Goal, A Community of Engaged Learners. Tritt works collaboratively to ensure all students are engaged in their academic and social learning to be best prepared for their future world.

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

Tritt Elementary opened in 1980 and is located in East Cobb County, Georgia. The school services students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Tritt has a reputation for being a quality, high-achieving school that provides the best education to all students, regardless of their learning needs. The school culture is built from a family-centered environment, commitment to educating the whole child, an invested community, professional awareness, and the dedication and competence of the staff to not only do their job, but to do it better than anyone else. Tritt's philosophy is based on the vision of: One Team, One Goal...A Community of Engaged Learners. As we expose the students to the most innovative ways to learn, we remain centered in character building to create a safe and productive learning environment, a strong, challenging curriculum, varied co-curricular activities, and a collaborative relationship between the school and community.

Over the last few years, we have transitioned from generalized curriculum into a fully-developed STEM school. Tritt has received three levels of STEM certification: district, state, and the nationally-known AdvancED certification. These prestigious awards prove that STEM education is authentic and pervasive in the lives of our students.

As part of the continuation of Tritt's innovative expectations, the school is now united in the pursuit of incorporating the arts into the daily lives of our students. For a full year, our general education teachers have immersed themselves into learning the language of the arts. Through collaboration with our specialists teachers, arts standards are integrated throughout the curriculum.

Speaking of certifications, Tritt is also home to the first official Library Learning Commons Certification in the nation! Our Library Learning Commons is an integral part of the success of Tritt Elementary School. The traditional library has gone through a transformation as old and outdated print materials have been replaced with more high interest print materials and up-to-date digital resources. Also gone is the traditional look of rows and rows of bookcases with no place to sit. Now, our Library Learning Commons is a collaborative and flexible environment which support hands-on, problem-based learning. One of our newer spaces is the MakerSpace where students can come to work on small or group projects, including green screen productions. Students and staff feel welcome to use the spaces and resources as needed in a truly flexible learning environment.

Our instructional philosophies are steeped in the importance of teaching required standards, while extending learning to benefit the whole child. Our teachers collaborate weekly to focus their understanding on what to teach, how to assess, and how to modify their instruction to meet the needs of varied learners. Students also learn the importance of collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and communication through problem-based learning strategies. As a growth mindset school, Tritt teaches students the importance of perseverance, self-acceptance, and resiliency.

Other innovative practices at Tritt are:

Classroom Technology – Each Tritt classroom has access to a variety of different technology tools. There are approximately five iPads and five laptops in every classroom. One designated computer lab, multiple laptop carts, and two iPad carts are also available when teachers wish to deliver whole-class instruction. Tritt also is home to a truly paperless classroom. Through 1:1 device ratio, each student researches, learns, and completes assignments completely through technology. Just this year, we have begun adding digital hallway bulletin boards to showcase digital products created by our students.

Adopt-A-Stream – Adopt-A-Stream is an interdisciplinary river awareness curriculum focusing on the water quality of Georgia's waterways, especially the Chattahoochee River. The goals are to help students develop a sense of pride, awareness, and appreciation for their environment, to understand the role water plays in their lives, to obtain an understanding of the interdependence between animals and their environment, and to create life-long stewards our most precious resource, water. The units of study are: Life is a River and F.L.O.W. (Forging Leadership in our Waterways). Our students adopt Chimney Springs Creek through Adopt-A-Stream. We are proud to announce that Tritt has been selected as the Georgia School Winner for

both 2017 and 2018.

STEAM Showcase Days – Tritt hosts community members, parents, and colleagues quarterly as a way to showcase what our students are learning and how they use the engineering process to solve challenges. Our goal for these special days is to allow our students the time to "show off" what they know and gain confidence in speaking and re-delivering to adults. Tritt believes in developing the whole-child and helping our students learn this skill is something not in the standards, but important in life and "real-world" application.

Learning Gardens via Captain Planet - Tritt has been a partner with Captain Planet for many years. We use their lessons integrated with our standards to teach students while working in the gardens. Students plant, measure growth, and harvest a native Georgia plant. There have also been cooking demonstrations for the students using crops grown on campus. In addition to our official garden area, vertical gardens and outdoor learning spaces are spread across the campus.

Tritt Elementary was awarded the National Blue Ribbon award in 2013. Winning this award filled our community with pride and increased our motivation for continued success. We believe that the quest for continuous improvement does not imply a problem. Rather it is the drive to always be better, do more, and achieve great things. Since winning the award in 2013, our reflective practices have been centered on continuing academic success and growing our exemplary practices.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Tritt follows its vision of “One Team... One Goal... A Community of Engaged Learners” by keeping students’ academic success always in focus. Our students are high performers, evidenced by consistent assessment results that show 96% of our students perform at or above grade level. We attribute our success to multiple factors: students who arrive with school-ready skills, highly engaged families, and a teaching staff devoted to understanding data to drive instruction.

Our recent school improvement plan led to an increased focus on the essential building block of school success. Through data analysis, we identified the need to improve literacy instruction to ensure our readers and writers maintain academic growth. We have fully implemented workshop model instruction using a balanced literacy approach. We have worked to create universal language and expectations from kindergarten through fifth grade. In both reading and writing workshop model, our students receive a mini-lesson tightly focused on the standard or learning target of the day. Students then interact with the standard independently through differentiated activities. During this time, our teachers work in guided reading groups to meet the individual needs of their students. They are able to collect data, both formally and informally, that allows them to plan the progression of units at a pace that meets their students’ needs.

1b. Mathematics:

Math instruction at Tritt also follows the principles of workshop model instruction through balanced mathematics approach. This allows the acquisition of math skills through conceptual instructional strategies. Our goal is for our students to think critically and apply higher-order problem solving skills. The focus is no longer on speed and memorization. Our math philosophy is to ensure our students can model mathematical concepts in multiple ways, use written communication to explain their thinking, work with manipulatives to deepen their understanding, and implement daily habits of mathematical thinking. Through daily number talks, partner sharing, collaborative groups, and a written component, students are exposed to explaining their math thinking consistently within the math workshop. Our teachers use formative assessments to create needs-based groups during the workshop time. We place a high value on differentiation during math. Our teachers collaborate weekly to ensure each classroom is prepared to reach students at their level for each standard and skill.

1c. Science:

At Tritt, we deliver science instruction through hands-on activities and problem-based learning scenarios. As a triple certified STEM school, our teachers have gone through rigorous professional development in order to integrate multiple curriculum areas into the science standards. Our students learn the importance of making observations, crafting meaningful questions, defining problems, and developing models to aid their thinking. They plan and carry out purposeful investigations to then construct solutions. Using community resources, many of our students work directly with companies/organizations to understand the real-world problems they face. Through mentor relationships, field trips, and joint-problem solving, our students collaborate in an authentic way to impact our community. Science instruction is so valued at Tritt that our Foundation funds a fully-equipped science lab and instructor to supplement our specials rotation. Our science lab instructor works closely with each grade level team to ensure the pacing of the curriculum in the classroom compliments the science lab. Teachers will introduce the standard, learning target, and vocabulary. Then, each class will participate in an engaging and hands on learning experience with that standard. Students also have the ability to participate in Science Olympiad teams, Science Fair competitions, and Invention Convention.

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

Through balanced social studies instruction, we strive to inspire our students with the skills and knowledge needed to become global citizens. We want our students to have a strong foundation of history, the ability to make connections to their local communities, and an understanding of the importance of positively impacting the world. Students study history, civics, government, economics, and geography to be able to engage in the type of thinking that leads to resolving problems. Teachers consistently collaborate with our media specialist and technology lab teacher to plan extension research-based lessons with social studies standards. After the students conduct their research, they use a variety of product creation tools to present information to the class.

In all curriculum areas, a balanced assessment plan is utilized. This is developed in our collaborative teaching teams to ensure consistency across the grade level, adherence to the standards, and the timeliness of receiving data to analyze. Assessment data is evaluated weekly to look for trends across student groups in order to adjust teaching. This promotes our continual message that the students in the school do not belong to a particular teacher. They are all our students. We work to group students by their academic need in conjunction with the standard we are teaching.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Learning standards are expanded outside the core curriculum in multiple ways. All students participate in a specials area rotation that includes art, music, physical education, science lab, and technology lab. Learning opportunities are also extended outside of the regular school day through academic clubs and STEAM-based clubs offered by our Foundation.

During music class, students learn the essential knowledge and skills that allow them to develop an appreciation of the performing arts. On any given day, students could be singing, dancing, interpreting, improvising, playing instruments, or communicating. In fact, most days include all of these activities and more. The music classroom is also a place that supports our values of inclusivity, as it hosts a wide variety of music from different cultures around the world. Students also get the opportunity to perform through our Tritt Tiger Chorus, Tiger Beats percussion group, and grade level performances throughout the year.

During art, our students are encouraged to use higher-order thinking skills as they explore the history of art, techniques of famous artists, and artistic skills needed to produce pleasing artifacts. Instruction is delivered through four different strands: production, presenting, responding, and connecting. Our instructional goal is always to build a lifelong love of the arts and the talent in which to express their own creativity. In celebration of our artists, Tritt hosts a school-wide art show, in which every student has a displayed piece of art. Our young artists also have won several awards and have been featured in community art shows across our community.

Our physical education teachers understand the strong data connection between healthy bodies and healthy minds. Our instructional program has a simple goal: create knowledge and skills that allow our students to experience a healthy lifestyle all the way through adulthood. Their instructional days are filled with age-appropriate skills progressions, fun games to build strength and endurance, and multiple opportunities to just get out and move. Each day, third through fifth graders have the opportunity to participate in a morning run across campus. Our PE department also organizes a 5K race and 1 mile fun run, called the Tritt Trot, to encourage families to participate in healthy activities together. You can often find our PE teachers giving up their planning time to go into primary classrooms to teach math movement. This innovative initiative helps connect math fluency with physical movement.

Our science lab is an official Project Lead The Way learning space. This nonprofit organization provides engineering learning curriculum for K-12 students and teachers across the U.S. through pathways in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science, students learn problem-solving strategies, critical and creative thinking, and how to communicate and collaborate. We are very excited to be the first school in Cobb County, and one of the first in the state, to pilot the Project Lead The Way “Launch” curriculum for elementary schools. We are shaping the innovators, creators, and designers of today and tomorrow.

Students in the technology lab in grades K-5 develop their digital literacy through lessons in digital citizenship (safe searching, social media, website evaluation, etc.), keyboarding, and computational thinking with coding in Code.org, Scratch, and Sphero. They use a variety of digital tools to enhance their classroom learning. From collaborative tools in Office 365 to creativity tools with greenscreen, digital art, and storytelling apps to apps that communicate their ideas and synthesis of curricular content to apps that develop their critical thinking skills, students learn that they need to pick the right tool to support their learning.

Our exemplary specialist teachers do so much more than teach their curriculum areas. They are a key component to the professional development of our classroom teachers as we work towards full integration of arts standards across the curriculum. Each month, our teachers meet in “STEAM Teams” to learn the framework of arts instruction across the grade level and collaborate with specialists to design learning experiences for our students.

Our school counselors also provide education that is central to our school’s vision of engaged learners. Students receive biweekly lessons that enhance their personal/social development, offer advisement of college and career readiness, and give strategies to ensure academic success. Our counselors meet in small, topic-focused groups to provide support to students with additional needs. At the heart of our counseling philosophy is the desire to build a sense of belonging and inclusivity throughout our school community. We host several “Mix It Up” days that foster communication and encourages students to eat lunch with new friends. This program was recognized as a model program from the Southern Poverty Law Center. Another program for inclusivity is “Hey Day” in which the entire school wears name tags to facilitate the use of meeting new friends and supporting the power of using peoples’ names.

3. Special Populations:

Our core belief in emotional safety and inclusivity extends to the support given to our special student populations. We believe that all students can and will learn. We believe in the future capabilities of all students, and we teach each student as if their possibilities are limitless. We also believe that early identification is crucial to the long-term success of our students.

This identification of struggling students begins in our grade level collaborative teams. Teacher teams meet weekly to discuss learning standards, create assessment plans, and analyze student performance data. As an instructional team, they are open to receiving feedback from each other in effective and student-specific instructional strategies.

Students who still struggle with normal classroom differentiation receive support through the Response to Intervention Process. Led by administration, teachers and parents join together to identify key areas of needed support, develop higher intensity interventions, and track students’ growth. The goal of this process is to find the strategies that work for an individual student and communicate these strategies throughout a students’ progression through different grades. This goal allows our teachers to keep the continuity of support year after year, instead of restarting each August.

Through universal screenings and consistently applied rubrics, some of our students participate in the Early Intervention Program (EIP). Students may receive targeted instruction in reading, math, and/or writing. Service models may be through smaller class sizes, additional teachers, or more intensive small group instruction. We plan for early identification so we can provide targeted and intensive support to allow the student to access grade level standards as soon as possible. Last year we served 62 students in kindergarten and first grades and only 24 in fourth and fifth grades. With our extremely low mobility rate, this decreasing

number shows the success of our program.

For students identified with a special education eligibility, many different levels of classroom support exists. Students may be served in a small group resource room, in a general education classroom with a supporting teacher, or may just have a weekly check-in to monitor progress. For each special education student, teachers are fully invested in understanding the students' individual needs. They create learning objectives and goals, monitor progress, and communicate regularly with parents. Most importantly, they work closely with all the teachers who serve the child to develop a cohesive and consistent instructional plan.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Tritt Elementary School consistently ranks high on climate surveys taken by our parents, staff members, and students. Tritt ranks highest in safety, communication, and focus on the educational interests of the child.

The creation of a positive school climate has been purposefully designed to create a feeling of sense of belonging and inclusivity. One of the easiest ways to accomplish this is to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice in the governance of the school. Our older students have the opportunity to participate in the Student Leadership Club. Led by an administrator and counselor, these students meet monthly to learn and practice leadership skills. They identify problems or needs relating to the school and establish a plan of action. They also participate in service projects to help other schools in need, and they lead the collection of donations for local food pantries. Our parents have the opportunity to lead and volunteer in our highly involved PTA and Foundation, along with participation in our School Council. The council meets quarterly, providing a venue for all members of Tritt community to have open communication, learn about school needs, and create a plan to benefit school improvement. Teacher voice is included into our school's decision making process in multiple ways. The school has a highly functioning Building Leadership Team consisting of one member from each department. The administration frequently surveys staff and parents to receive their opinions on climate, school events, and various other topics affecting the school. Teachers also serve as voting members of the PTA, Foundation, and School Council.

Including students and staff, Tritt Elementary School is home for roughly 1,000 people. Despite this large number, our school truly feels like a family. The majority of our students begin their educational career with us in kindergarten and stay through fifth grade. One hundred percent of our students move on to the same middle school and one hundred percent of those students move on to the same high school. This low mobility rate and single track feeder pattern allows us to build family relationships throughout a student's K-12 educational journey. We often host Tritt Alumni Events where our past students come back to their starting school to participate in activities to support our feeder pattern. Sports teams from the middle and high school visit frequently to open car doors and greet our students as they arrive. Older students also participate in peer mentoring opportunities through our After School Program. Our alumni are great role models for our students, and these connections serve as strengthening bonds of community across our area.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Family and community engagement is one of Tritt's strength areas. Several different organizations allow parents to actively participate in the daily operations of our school. All of the following organizations maintain a strong partnership with the school, aligning their individual mission to the continued success of our students.

Our PTA's goal is to make every child's potential a reality. They organize volunteers, fundraise for special projects, and plan events that support our STEAM initiatives. With almost 50 committees, there truly is a place for anyone who wants to join. Tritt's PTA was one of the first PTA organizations that brought a large fundraising program back to local control. Instead of contracting with an outside company, our PTA began the Tritt-Mazing Race (modelled after the Amazing Race television show). After raising money, students work cooperatively with their class to navigate a series of obstacles that are both academic and physical. Due to the strong commitment of our volunteers, 100% of donated funds stay within our school. PTA also plans and implements programs to expand our students' awareness of areas outside the traditional curriculum. They dedicate an entire week to Exceptional Children, Diversity Awareness, and Arts in Education. These week-long events feature speakers, performers, and activities all designed to create global understanding and inclusion.

Our Tritt Tiger Foundation (TTF) fills funding gaps that allows the school to offer innovative educational programs and cutting edge technology in our classrooms. The TTF fully funds our full-time Science Lab

teacher and provides the supplies for the Science and Technology Labs. They also plan and implement the Foundation After School Time Program that allows students the opportunity to join numerous clubs across all areas of STEAM instruction. A newly renovated space, called the STEAM Stop, is new this year. This space is filled with all the materials needed by our teachers to conduct hands-on, problem-based learning activities in support of our STEAM focus. Teachers can check out various materials like art carts, 3D digital pens, and even various types of robotic coding tools. Recycled and consumable materials are also available in the STEAM Stop to assist in the creation process of our students' projects.

In addition to local businesses joining the school through the Partners in Education program, we have also started collaborating with businesses as official STEAM partnerships. Our third grade team now collaborates with one of the largest recycling companies in the nation. Members of the company have visited our students to teach them why recycling matters and to discuss some of the challenges recycling plants face. Throughout the year, students are researching and designing their own solutions to these problems. This partnership will culminate in the entire third grade visiting a local recycling plant to see how their solutions work in the real world.

3. Professional Development:

The purpose of Tritt's professional development plan is to allow our teachers to develop their professional practices so that they can directly impact the continued growth of our students' academic success. Despite limited local school funding, we are able to provide a robust program thanks to the generous partnerships of our PTA and Tritt Tiger Foundation (TTF).

Through extensive data digs and analysis, we have identified literacy as the key focus of our professional development plans for the next two years. With district-led support, we have implemented a school-wide focus on delivering instructional content through the Workshop Model. Our TTF has provided funding which has allowed us to partner with the Columbia Teachers' College experts to provide a week-long intensive training for our intermediary teachers over the summer break. Our primary teachers are engaged in a year-long training focusing on Orton-Gillingham methodology. This methodology teaches phonics in a multi-sensory way and has shown great impact for all students.

As part of our teachers' evaluations, they create their own professional learning goal and an independent learning plan. While many of our teachers align their goals with our school-wide focus, personal goals allow teachers the flexibility to explore knowledge that more closely supports their needs. This allows specialists, gifted teachers, and special education teachers to improve in areas that more closely impact their students.

To support these plans, the administration conducts multiple walkthroughs and two extensive observations to judge the effectiveness of the training, the implementation in the classroom, and whether there are any further needs. The administration team monitors formative assessment data throughout the year to make sure we are progressing as expected. At our last review, each grade level showed increased performance levels compared to the previous year.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership team at Tritt consists of a principal, two assistant principals, and a student support administrator. The leadership team's commits to making decisions based on the needs of our students while creating a supportive and fun environment for all stakeholders. The leadership team also believes in frequent, positive communication designed to inform stakeholders of school successes, upcoming events, and opportunities for involvement.

The principal believes that strong leaders are present, visible, and knowledgeable of the day-to-day tasks that occur in the building. Leaders need a strong foundation of understanding regarding every person's role so that the operation of the school day is most efficient. Knowing that it is impossible to be everywhere at once, distributed leadership models are a key component of the leadership style of the principal. Increasing the capacity of each person to serve as a leader in their role leads to higher performance and job

satisfaction. The principal's main responsibility is to create the school's vision and mission, implement instructional leadership, and foster positive relationships between all the school's stakeholders.

The two assistant principals oversee the many operational demands of running a large school. Their duties are divided between primary and intermediary grades. Each one of them oversees discipline, instructional materials and practices, assessments, parent and teacher communication, and various other topics assigned to their grade bands.

Our student support administrator is the first point of contact for our special needs population. They are the experts on legal matters regarding the special education identification process. They also assist special education teachers create of a student's individualized educational plan, teach strategies to support student needs, and communicate with parents.

As part of distributed leadership, Tritt depends on their highly functioning Building Leadership Team. The team consists of one member of every grade level and department. Members meet once a month to develop leadership skills, increase communication and knowledge about school decisions, and provide input and planning to support the school's vision.

School administrators also depend on another key group called the Core Team. Consisting of administration, school counselors, the school psychologist, and the school social worker, this team meets weekly to discuss and monitor student progress. The team focuses on behavior needs, family support, and academic progress. These weekly meetings have been instrumental in providing consistent communication concerning the needs of our students and creating plans to assist their continual progress.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

It would be easy to attribute Tritt’s success to school-wide STEAM curriculum. This way of learning truly creates a school day rich in higher-order thinking questions, communication strategies, critical thinking, and creativity. However, what good is an instructional focus without an appropriate structure to support its implementation? For that reason, we believe the key practice instrumental to Tritt’s continued success is adherence to the professional learning communities model.

Each week, our teacher teams meet in collaborative work sessions centered on the following questions:

What do we want our students to learn? At the beginning of each quarter, our teachers work together to identify upcoming priority standards. These priorities could be essential standards that will endure across the year or they could also be prerequisite skills needed for upcoming learning expectations. Because each group of students are different, our teachers understand the importance of continually examining this process.

How will we know if they have learned it? Once our teacher teams identify priority standards, they begin to develop a cohesive and consistent assessment plan. The plan consists of ongoing formative assessments along with summative assessments. Throughout the quarter, data from these assessments is analyzed for key trends and progression through the learning targets. Once our teachers understand the data, they formulate plans to adjust their instruction.

How will we support students who didn’t learn it? Intervention plans are created as part of the PLC process. Through a district-provided assessment tool, teachers can easily disaggregate data by standard and student. This allows them to immediately pinpoint the students who would benefit from reteaching and other interventions. As an added bonus, focus on this question also supports the Response to Intervention Process. Our teachers do not require a separate meeting to address RTI concerns because RTI data is so naturally embedded in this part of the PLC process.

How will we support students who already learned it? At Tritt, our students arrive with a plethora of school-readiness skills. With supportive parents and growing up in a culture that supports education, many of our students function above grade level. One of our biggest challenges is enriching our students beyond the standard. Our teachers understand that enrichment doesn’t mean more work. Together, they create ways to go deeper in the standard to support our advanced learners.

We believe our teachers’ planning and collaboration inside our PLC culture is the key to our success. Working together, they turn our mission and vision into daily practice. Tritt is truly “One Team. . . One Goal. . . A Community of Engaged Learners.”