



## **Part I – Eligibility Certification**

---

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

---

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 2 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	15	11	26
1	6	8	14
2	10	12	22
3	12	17	29
4	10	11	21
5	10	6	16
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>	63	65	128

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 0 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 98 % White
  - 0 % Two or more races
- 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 17%

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

During the previous five school years, the Morgan County School District, as well as East Valley Elementary, had seen a decline in enrollment. Parent and community surveys reflect a stagnant economic infrastructure since the tornado of 2012. The town of West Liberty, Kentucky was devastated by a mile-wide EF3 tornado killing 6 people. This disaster left many families without homes and many businesses unable to rebuild, resulting in job loss. Many families resided in mobile homes that were destroyed by the tornado. With the apartment complexes in Morgan County located outside of the East Valley School area, few options were left. These factors have forced people to move outside of West Liberty to seek employment and housing. The district mobility rate of Morgan County Schools is the same as East Valley at nearly 17%.

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	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	24
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	143
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.17
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	17

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %  
0 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 79 %  
Total number students who qualify: 101

8. Students receiving special education services: 33 %  
42 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>3</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>8</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>1</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>19</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>6</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: 3
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.	6
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 18:1

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	94%	93%	93%	93%	94%
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.

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

East Valley will partner with families and the community to provide quality instruction in a safe environment to create responsible and respectful 21st century learners.

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**

---

In rural Eastern Kentucky, East Valley Elementary is situated between beautiful, rolling hills. Most families in the area find employment at sawmills, restaurants, factories, or the prison. Out of 128 students currently enrolled, 79% receive free or reduced lunch. There is a special education population of 33%. East Valley prides itself on being a small, family-oriented, safe school with high expectations for all students.

East Valley was built in 1996 to replace a smaller school, Crockett Elementary. The school is located approximately 8 miles outside of city limits. The school's population of students can be found deep in hollows, often a thirty minute drive to the local library.

Serving as the hub of the small community, families await Parent and Family Engagement events such as the annual Christmas Play, Grandparents Day, Literacy Nights, and Awards Day Ceremonies. These occasions are met with packed parking lots and full bleachers of excited spectators eager to share in the successes of the community's youth.

Historically, per the guidelines of Kentucky's Accountability System, the school has fluctuated in academic achievement between the labels of a Proficient and a Needs Improvement School. Consistency in making growth has been difficult. The school performed at the bottom of the district for many years. The lack of growth can be contributed to a span of time in which there were four principals in only five years, laying a foundation of inconsistency across the culture and climate of the school community. In the past two years, the principal and staff have made changes to help ensure more consistency. The biggest change includes a culture shift in expectations and a newfound outlook, resulting in higher expectations of students and an intentional focus on the delivery of specialized instruction through special education. Staff members believe this cultural shift is the key to maintaining their success for many years to come.

To create a school culture excited for learning, staff collaborates to set goals and create plans for celebration when goals are met or exceeded. Students are working harder to achieve better attendance supported by monthly attendance incentives. The number of library books being read continues to grow as students are working toward term reading goals. The continuous decline in office referrals paired with an increase in classroom engagement, has been a result of intentional communication of goals and the delivery of rewards. East Valley has worked diligently to become a Positive Behavior Interventions and Support School. The students and staff work daily to proactively replace negative behaviors with positive self-awareness, self-monitoring, and a social and emotional curriculum to assist students in learning how to handle their feelings in difficult situations.

Classroom engagement has been a work in progress. Data through classroom observations, student interviews, and student achievement show a shift from passive to active engagement. Engagement has improved through utilization of whole brain teaching strategies. Strategies include the use of gestures with hand motions by students and teachers, student led discussion during lessons, and higher-level questioning techniques challenging students to think critically.

When East Valley teachers are asked the reason for increased success, their answers are very similar. They point out an intentional focus on the Kentucky Academic Standards when planning lessons rather than the reliance on resources to plan lessons for them. Additionally, teachers believe implementation of a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System has allowed them to focus all of their expectations on the needs of all of their students rather than spending time managing negative behaviors. In an ever-evolving society, staff members strive to stay ahead by having an 'average is over' mindset. This mindset, paired with the realization that if students will be successful global citizens in the future, they will need to be able to create, analyze, and become problem solvers with extraordinary critical thinking skills.

Achievements in assessment, such as meeting a reading or math goal are celebration milestones. Between May 2016 and May 2017, all three measured areas on the Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (KPREP) increased. Achievement increased from 66.9 to 93.2. Gap (comparing performance of students who are members of traditionally underperforming groups to the goal of 100 percent proficiency in

all five content areas) increased from 31.0 to 88.1. Growth increased from 66.5 to 85.9. On the KPREP assessment, success continued from May 2017 to May 2018. Among top scores in the state, the Proficiency Indicator score was 98.7 for the areas of Reading and Math, and the Separate Academic Indicator was 87.6 for the areas of Science, Social Studies, and Writing performance.

After many years of low performance, East Valley is now in the third year with consistent leadership and high expectations. Leadership strategies implemented to maintain high performance include building and maintaining a vision for continued excellence. Necessary professional development is provided to ensure growth of high quality teaching and learning. Organization and management systems in place will safeguard maintaining the current levels of high performance.

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

---

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

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

With the belief that reading is the foundation for all other subjects, data is analyzed regularly and used for decision making for student growth. Various forms of data are analyzed including, but not limited to, the district universal screener (Measures of Academic Progress-MAP Assessment), the Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR) from Renaissance Learning, and oral reading fluency checks in all grades every nine weeks. During Professional Learning Communities, teachers use this information to determine those students meeting goals, making progress, and those in need of intervention in reading.

A foundational phonics program is used in kindergarten through grade three as a building block for oral reading fluency. Repeated reading is a strategy focused on creating fluent readers with proficient reading comprehension skills utilized in all grades. To build an overall love of reading while increasing fluency and comprehension, students choose, and are assessed on, books based on individual interest and ability level. Goals are set and students are rewarded each nine weeks for progress toward meeting these goals.

Writing is a focus area for East Valley. Through a new curriculum implemented this year, students were given a pre-test and will be monitored regularly to check for growth. Additionally, students are given timed writing assessments each nine weeks. The data from these assessments are monitored and used as a tool for determining students in need of intervention or enrichment in writing.

Students practice speaking and listening skills by sharing written pieces and group discussion embedded in all daily lessons. Additionally, students recount stories and events. Student leaders lead engagement events to practice speaking to large groups. There are opportunities for students to apply for a classroom job as class secretary. With this job, students answer the phone and take messages. Social studies class lends opportunities for students to debate historical controversies with one another.

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

After Kentucky's adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards, cross-curriculum learning in math and science have become more of an intentional focus. Learning standards are addressed with the first focus of the school year on measurement and data. After deconstruction of the math and science standards, teachers found these skills were crucial in interpreting and explaining data in the area of science. Once this area is mastered, the focus shifts to number and operations in base ten to ensure students have a proficient understanding of basic number sense upon which to build new skills. From this starting point, the Kentucky Academic Standards are followed for mastery of content knowledge at each grade level.

Differentiation is significant in math classrooms. Teachers at East Valley focus on the use of manipulatives, highly effective classroom instruction during both small and whole group, and opportunities for students to productively struggle to learn new concepts. Beginning new units include addressing misconceptions and assumptions. Students learn new skills through direct instruction and tiered interventions. Once skills are taught and the foundation for conceptual understanding has begun, the focus shifts to assessment through problem solving, and with independent drill and practice activities. During the problem solving process, students are challenged to create and solve problems. This phase allows students to demonstrate math skills and apply them to real-world scenarios.

Various strategic groupings result in mathematical academic growth. Students are given multiple opportunities to learn through whole group direct instruction, small group teacher or paraprofessional guided instruction, dedicated intervention time, independent discovery time, and peer assisted learning time. During peer assisted learning time, students take turns coaching and correcting one another. Through this phase, students are given the opportunity to learn from their own mistakes and gain a deeper understanding allowing mathematical relationships to form among concepts.

## **1c. Science:**

An East Valley science lesson can best be described as a collaborative journey of exploration between young minds. High student engagement is evident at first glance in the classroom. Students begin units with a thorough understanding of key vocabulary through the use of gestures demonstrated by the teacher and the students. There is no time for a "sit and get" style of learning. Exploration is planned and facilitated to allow students to analyze scenarios in order to formulate new ideas. Lots of opportunities are given for students to investigate ideas new to their schema and build new creations with their newfound knowledge. During a daily lesson, students are assessed by formulating a plan to justify their claims, evidence, and reasoning. Intentional, planned questions for each lesson ensure critical thinking and exploration. Content in all grades is taught on the basis of the Next Generation Science Standards. Students begin learning foundational skills for physical, life, and earth and space science in kindergarten and build upon those through all grade levels.

Real-world connections are part of daily problem solving. Misconceptions are often already formed in a young child's mind. Lessons allow for the teacher to introduce new knowledge, address misconceptions, and allow students time to explore their misconceptions in order to gain deeper understanding of the content. This promotes an open mind leading to the discovery that science can have more than one right answer.

A culture of learning is evident each day in science classrooms at East Valley. Students are taught to have a growth mindset, encouraging them to keep trying when they are unsuccessful in a new investigation. Classroom leadership and the table design in third through fifth grade classrooms encourages students to work in groups to share ideas and build upon collective knowledge.

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

Teachers motivate students during social studies lessons by dressing in costumes to role play historic events, touring the courthouse to learn a civics lesson about local government, or reading about Native Americans in the novel *The Birchbark House*. Implementation of lessons is based on social studies standards and provide opportunities to learn in creative ways.

Better understanding of historic events and geographical regions are provided through field trips. These experiences offer perspectives not found in classroom materials. Students have traveled to many historic places, including The Kentucky Horse Park, Belle of Louisville, Louisville Slugger Museum, and Churchill Downs. Creating 21st century classrooms has allowed many other experiences through virtual field trips. Technology instruction through interactive lessons allows students to visualize living through events and conflicts in history.

Engagement is further promoted by allowing students to apply new knowledge through lessons giving students opportunities to solve historical conflicts. This requires them to think critically and problem solve using new information and their own knowledge of history.

Economics skills are promoted through a partnership with the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Office. Fourth and fifth grade students are given opportunities to visit fictional reality stores teaching them about budgets, taxes, careers, and making wise economic choices. During this experience, students are given a job and an amount of simulated currency on which they must survive for one month. Students are assessed by the choices they make to determine if they are successful.

Students in fifth grade have an annual Market Day. During this event, students are assessed by creating and selling their own products and analyzing the results. The event focuses learning on supply and demand, and profits. Students create their own commercials to market their products. The commercials are aired on the local television station, and Market Day is eventually open to the public and all younger students in the building.

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

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

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

East Valley Elementary strives to provide rich opportunities for students. Kentucky Academic Standards guide instruction in all curriculum areas. Teachers take pride in planning lessons, providing opportunities for students to think "outside the box", and apply knowledge from other focus areas that may be a particular strength for them.

Visual and performing arts are embedded in daily instruction. There are opportunities to participate in Readers' Theaters and role playing social studies lessons on a regular basis. Students plan and prepare for the annual Christmas play. Students dress in costumes and demonstrate a student-led performance involving all students in kindergarten through fifth grades. Some students hold speaking parts, sing or play instruments, or assist with the behind the scenes execution of the play and creation of props. Various opportunities are given for all students to perform throughout the school year during Veteran's Day, Grandparent's Day, and many other programs. The National Anthem is performed by a student before each ballgame.

Physical education and health and nutrition are part of daily routine. Students receive twenty minutes of daily physical activity, in addition to a fifty minute physical education class two times per week. A variety of options are given during these classes including basketball, kickball, interactive musical drums, jump rope, and other organized activities. Each afternoon, students are given snack time. Healthy choices are given that meet nutritional guidelines. Teachers partner with the University of Kentucky's Cooperative Extension Office to provide classes allowing students to try healthy snacks and offering them knowledge about nutrition. During Career Day, all students have the opportunity to speak with individuals in the medical field to gain additional information about how to live healthy lifestyles. Also, students from the Morgan County Area Technology Center visit the school to teach students basic health and nutrition information each year. During this event, students learn basic lifesaving procedures and have the opportunity to practice Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Fourth and fifth grade students participate in a health fair with others across the district. The event affords students the opportunity to learn how to make and maintain healthy lifestyle choices.

All students are provided daily foreign language classes. The Morgan County School District has partnered with the University of Kentucky Confucius Institute to provide Mandarin language and cultural opportunities. Through this program, students in all grades are taught skills and provided with opportunities to excel in Mandarin. Students have competed in the Moon Festival Art and Essay Contest, as well as the Chinese Speech Competition at the state level. The arts are incorporated into foreign language as students create projects annually for the Chinese New Year and the Moon Festival Art and Essay Contest. East Valley also provides an annual Chinese Cultural Showcase event incorporating martial arts, Tai Chi, art, and traditional musical instruments.

One-to-one initiative allows teachers to provide technology-based teaching methods and resources engaging students at higher levels. The initiative affords virtual field trips, creation of multimedia presentations, and better communication between students and teachers through Google Classrooms. The library/media center provides a vibrant learning environment allowing students to choose books of interest and books needed for classroom research. The library is a location for a vast amount of means for students to build their skills by analyzing and interpreting various types of resources.

All students receive instruction bi-monthly in a social and emotional curriculum. This curriculum promotes positive character and understanding of how to manage difficulties in life. The school-wide behavior plan focuses on character building through the utilization of Dr. Stephen R. Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People highlighted by the Leader in Me Program. Although East Valley is not a Leader in Me school, several of the key concepts of the program have been adopted to promote social and emotional learning for all students. Partnership with the Family Resource Center provides students with classes

focused on bullying prevention. Students are provided career and life skills through annual career events and instructional practices including real-world connections to content.

We believe the essential skills and knowledge taught in these areas, provide students with a life-long foundation, upon which to build additional knowledge.

### **3. Special Populations:**

High expectations for all students is our creed. We believe every student can learn at high levels when given an appropriate environment. High quality instruction and student grouping allow for an environment conducive to meet the needs of those students in need of intervention or enrichment.

A glimpse of the day at East Valley begins with a ninety minute reading block, followed by a ninety minute math block. During these stretches of time, the regular education teacher delivers whole group instruction for thirty minutes. Another thirty minutes of the lesson allows for cooperative learning among students paired with independent assessment time. Additionally, schedules allow for teachers to have assistance for thirty minutes of their reading and math block. During core instruction time, the regular education teacher, special education teachers, Response to Intervention teacher and instructional assistants collaborate to provide small group instruction at the direction of the regular education teacher. During small group instruction, opportunities are given for students to work in groups of three to six, with an adult to guide lessons, as needed. Similar to reading and math, writing is a separate sixty minute block of time. There are various adults to rotate in and out of classrooms to assist with writing. This helps to ensure students are getting one-on-one and small group instruction that will address both intervention and enrichment.

A system of tiered interventions is in place and monitored monthly for fidelity. East Valley has an Academic and Behavior Team meeting once per month to analyze the Response to Intervention Plan, as well as student data in academics, behavior, and attendance. Each day has dedicated intervention time built into the school schedule. Extended School Services are also used to provide time for students to work in small groups and one-on-one. Interventions are supported through on-going staff collaboration with all stakeholders.

Students with disabilities are included in the regular classroom for the majority of the day. For many of those students, their least restrictive environment has been determined to be in the classroom with their peers. The schedule at East Valley is flexible to allow time in the resource classroom, if needed. Through effective co-teaching between the regular and special education teacher, positive results have been noted in all academic and behavioral areas.

Data show males performing lower in all subgroups, but more than 10 percent in the areas of writing and math. The number of students scoring proficient or distinguished in math was 77.6%, while only 65% of males scored proficient or distinguished in this subject. Additionally, 61.3% of students scored proficient or distinguished in writing, while only 38.9% of males scored proficient or distinguished in writing. Since this has been identified as a trend over the last few years, there is a direct focus on decreasing this gap. One strategy is the utilization of reading and writing topics of higher interest to males. During student grouping opportunities, the research based strategy of student coaching is utilized by grouping males with females for collaborative learning.

Advanced learners are challenged through a system of tiered interventions. The most common intervention used is flexible, differentiated grouping to extend lessons to a higher level. Mentorship opportunities with same age peers and younger peers are provided also. Advanced learners often have student choice of enrichment activities (creating artwork aligned to the content, creating a writing piece aligned to the lesson, and other preplanned extension lessons).

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

---

### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Buses and cars unload each morning to familiar faces, greeting students with "Good Mornings". Cafeteria doors open to nutrition and more friendly faces to sit with students, listen to their stories, and provide all the hugs and encouraging words needed to start the day. A review of daily expectations are led by students at the close of breakfast.

The halls of East Valley Elementary are decorated with vibrant colors, distinguished student work samples, and pictures of classroom and bus rider Students of the Month. Continuity of themed bulletin board decorations often created by parent and community volunteers, provide students a sense of teamwork throughout the building. Pride is taken in providing students with an inviting, clean, and safe environment where students are eager to embrace learning.

Student engagement is encouraged through utilization of one-to-one technology, whole brain teaching strategies, and planning of real-world, relevant lessons. Well-organized, well-planned classrooms provide students with a structured learning environment accompanied with high-expectations for all students. Since becoming a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports School using a multi-tiered approach, students have shown improvements in social, emotional, and academic outcomes. Students are motivated on an individual basis through positive principal office referrals and positive post cards sent home recognizing academic and behavioral accomplishments.

Partnership with the school's Family Resource Center programs, in collaboration with community members, provides opportunities to meet the basic needs of students outside of the classroom walls. Students are given weekend snack packs, coats during the cooler months, new shoes and clothing when needed, basic school supplies, and a relationship that helps to strengthen families to raise healthy children.

Staff members at East Valley feel valued through a culture of appreciation for their hard work and daily diligence in meeting student needs. Leadership listens to the needs of the staff and communicates regularly with them. The principal provides the staff with a Sunday weekly calendar update to give them an overview of the week ahead. The school culture allows for the celebration of successes on a regular basis.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Collaboration is important to overall student success. East Valley Elementary collaborates with the School-Based Decision Making Council, the Family Resource Center, and the Parent-Teacher Community Organization (PTCO) to provide family and community engagement events. Some of those include, Math and Science Night, Family Literacy Night, Dads Against Drugs Basketball Game, Career Day, Parent-Teacher Conferences, Back-to-School Nights, as well as a range of other events throughout the year.

Monthly PTCO meetings allow parents to be stakeholders in the school's planning and events. Little Learners, a monthly program provided to children from birth to age five is an example of an event used to help increase school readiness and strengthen families.

Parents and families are informed of students' academic achievements and challenges through communication folders on a weekly basis. These folders contain notes of upcoming events, notes from the teacher, and student work. Families are invited to write and return notes with other information back to teachers in these folders to increase communication between home and school. Teachers also provide weekly newsletters for parents and students detailing the instructional focus for the week and upcoming engagement events.

Volunteer training is offered several times per year. Volunteers are encouraged to assist to increase student success and school improvement. Volunteers assist with organizing classroom libraries, creating a vibrant learning environment, preparing copies for classrooms, and organizing family and community engagement

events. Training offers tips for how to effectively collaborate with staff members. Volunteers will also be provided information from the Needs Assessment Survey and Title I plan in order to gain a better understanding of the needs of the students and the school.

Community involvement has been a huge part of success and student growth for the students of East Valley. Collaboration with a local cooperative provided science tables for third, fourth, and fifth grade students designed to allow for more collaborative learning. Annually, community members come into the school to provide opportunities for students to explore different careers through a career day event. Many opportunities are provided for students through the local extension office. Students are afforded chances to participate in speech and demonstration exercises to help prepare them for future college and career experiences. Students are provided times to tour local businesses and government offices to gain knowledge to further enhance their educational experience. Cooperation with the local newspaper has proven successful in informing the community of events and school accomplishments.

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

Professional development is provided to address the school's goals and challenges. Data is analyzed and teachers are given the opportunity to provide feedback on what they need to be successful. Data is utilized from Family Resource Center parent surveys, including Title I surveys, KPREP scores, district universal screener scores, school-wide behavior progress monitoring, principal walk through data, and classroom assessment data. Additionally, professional development is provided on the basis of changes within the Department of Education to ensure teachers stay up-to-date with all curriculum, instruction and assessment changes.

Data is analyzed, school goals are set, and an action plan is created to help ensure the professional development plan supports student achievement and school improvement. The action plan not only includes the professional development, but the plan for monitoring the progress toward meeting the set goals.

Types of professional development include self-study courses, workshops, conferences, observation of other teachers, book studies and much more. Professional development is provided using evidence-based materials tailored to the needs of the school and the district. The focus of this school year has been on reducing the gap in male scores and writing since this was our lowest performing area during the previous school year. One of the most popular forms of professional development is job-embedded. Through this method, teachers are given opportunities to learn new strategies and observe effective teachers. This is supported by time for self-reflection to help them plan how they will use the strategies they've learned in their own classrooms.

The goal for professional development, of both East Valley Elementary and Morgan County Schools, includes a plan that will impact job performance through specialized training intended to increase knowledge, competency, skills, and effectiveness. Increased job performance on behalf of the staff will assist them in aligning activities to the Kentucky Academic Standards while supporting student achievement and school improvement.

Education is an ever-evolving profession and the goal is to stay aligned with the changes. The principal models an intentionally focused alignment by participating in her own leadership professional development. The enrollment in the National Institute for School Leadership results in the provision of the best possible learning expectation for all staff and students. East Valley staff members demonstrate the value in not only creating a culture of life-long learners, but also leading that philosophy by example. Data shows these activities have made a positive impact on teacher quality and student achievement.

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

Since the school opened in 1996, East Valley has had eight different building or interim principals. This turnover has resulted in not only inconsistent expectations, but in a negative climate and culture as well. However, within the last three years, the consistent leadership has resulted in high expectations for all

stakeholders. As a result, clear expectations and a positive change in climate and culture prevails.

The leadership philosophy of "all students can learn at high levels when given the appropriate environment" is the root of the high expectations communicated to all staff members through job-embedded professional development opportunities. These expectations are communicated to staff members through professional learning opportunities, weekly update emails from the principal, walk through feedback, and communication with all stakeholders to build a culture of learning. The administrative staff is comprised of one principal. The school is provided counseling services through an outside agency partnering for student success. A leadership team is comprised of the principal and teacher leaders supported by assistance from district personnel.

East Valley's Academic and Behavior Team meets monthly to help ensure student needs are being met. The team consists of the school's Response to Intervention teacher, one special education teacher, one primary teacher, and one intermediate teacher. The team analyzes data from academics and behavior. During these meetings, the schools' Response to Intervention Program is continuously evaluated and modified for fidelity.

The School Based Decision Making (SBDM) Council is comprised of two parents, three teachers, and the principal as the acting chair. The SBDM Council meets on a monthly basis. This group reviews policies and educational programs in the school to make informed decisions to best serve students to ensure high academic achievement.

The Family Resource Center (FRC) Coordinator serves as a leader for building strong relationships with families. The FRC works to meet students' needs both inside and outside of the classroom. To build relationship with families and bridge the gap between home and school, it is common practice for the FRC Director and the school principal to make home visits, when needed. The FRC has an advisory council consisting of community members, parents, and district personnel all partnering to enhance academic performance by removing barriers to learning.

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

---

East Valley Elementary has always been a family-oriented, small school that is the heart of the community; however, lack of academic progress has been a barrier. The problems weren't poor instruction, lack of resources, or community support. Inconsistent leadership and a history of less than positive culture and climate had become the norm. The community had accepted that year after year the school would be the lowest performing in the district.

Staff members have willingly implemented many changes in the last few years ranging from putting effective systems in place for behavior, instruction, and family and community engagement. However, the East Valley community will agree, the one practice that has forever changed the way the school operates is the cultural shift in expectations. There is a mindset of all students working to achieve great things on a daily basis to better prepare them to be college and career ready.

The high expectations at East Valley provide students with a culture excited to celebrate academic success much in the same fashion as many would celebrate athletic success. A culture of high expectations has motivated staff to celebrate meeting goals. During the state assessment window, teachers decorate the walls with themes to motivate students to perform to the best of their ability. Teachers are already planning for students to "Master Distinction and Beyond" with an outer space theme during this year's assessment.

This cultural shift has led to increased student confidence and willingness to go the extra mile. There is no longer a mindset among students that they can't meet goals, it is now a mindset encouraging them to ask for extra help. Families recognize the changes in education and are becoming more involved each day in their child's education. The percentage of parents who received a conference with their child's teacher has increased from 36% in 2016, 60% in 2017, and 82% in 2018.

East Valley staff, students, and the community have learned that, although policies and procedures may be in place, it takes a culture shift in expectations from the top down to make academic, social, and emotional growth. The one practice making our school successful is the cultural mind shift that says we can do it, we have done it before, and we will continue to do it again because it's important to our success as individuals, as a school, and as a community.