

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):
- 17 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 8 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 28 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	8	12	20
K	31	15	46
1	17	18	35
2	18	16	34
3	21	25	46
4	26	17	43
5	10	11	21
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	131	114	245

*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):
- 5 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0 % Asian
 - 15 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 78 % 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: 15%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	12
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	18
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	30
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	196
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.15
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	15

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 56%
Total number students who qualify: 136

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
27 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>5</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>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>6</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>4</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: 4
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	12
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
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 21:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

We the people of St. Charles Elementary and community, are working together to become better students, good citizens and life-long 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

St. Charles Elementary School is nestled amongst giant oaks in the tranquil St. Charles Community located in Lafourche Parish. Minutes from Lafourche Crossing and just south of the city of Thibodaux, the St. Charles Community is split with the flowing waters of Bayou Lafourche. This deep-rooted family-oriented community can reminisce with stories of the Oaks Festival, Greenie and Goldie school football teams, and a summer recreation program which was held on the grounds of this quaint country school. The oilfield industry, sugarcane farming, and livestock, along with family businesses and industries, are important resources which keep Lafourche Parish thriving.

St. Charles Elementary School's existing historic main building was constructed in 1919 as St. Charles High School. This high school was built with the intention to merge three small surrounding schools. During this time, students and community members utilized a ferry to cross Bayou Lafourche to travel between school and church. As the 1943-1944 school year came to a close, the school was converted from a high school to an elementary school. In the early years of this new configuration, St. Charles Elementary School expanded its school site with the addition of several portable buildings to service students in grades first through seventh. In the 1970s, kindergarten was added to the campus. In the fall of 2000, once again the school configuration changed as the sixth and seventh grade students transitioned to the local middle schools. Today, St. Charles Elementary School services pre-kindergarten through fifth grade classes all while preserving the ambiance from the charming school's early days as the parents, students, faculty, staff, and administration remain a close knit school family.

Today, St. Charles has grown to service the needs of its community. St. Charles is a Title I school and is one of the smallest schools in the district. The school educates 245 students in 13 homerooms. Currently 65% of our faculty and staff have been part of the Wildcat Family for over five years. The newer staff members have joined the staff either after new positions have been added to our school or after other members have retired. This school year, 56% of our 245 students receive free or reduced lunch. This percentage has been on the rise since our families' jobs have been affected by the decline of the oilfield industry.

In January 2015, the current principal was appointed, and with her appointment, she shifted the focus of the school in order to increase expectations for all. The new vision of St. Charles Elementary has become a focus on high expectations through purposeful instructional time with alignment and rigor for all activities. The school vision promotes student led learning and ownership of learning and pushes faculty and students to reach beyond their comfort zones to excel.

With a specific vision in place, structures were built to accomplish this mindset shift. Teachers have incorporated team meetings for every third, fourth, and fifth grade student. The team consists of the teachers, parents and the student. Teams review several sources of data which includes previous grades, previous year's growth, current reading and math levels, and previous state test results and expected growth targets. The team then establishes the student's individual yearly goal. These team meetings have been very powerful and motivational.

In addition to an academic structure, we also instituted a social structure to reach our school vision. In August 2016, a new Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) plan was implemented. This plan has created a proactive approach to establish the behavioral supports and school-wide social culture needed for all students to achieve social, emotional, and academic success. The plan is aligned to and supports our vision for high expectations and student ownership for success. Students take pride in their choices and strive daily to clip-up to Top Cat status, which is the highest color on the classroom chart. Students proudly walk around campus with a gold crown after being named a Top Cat, and their name is posted on our Wildcat news board for our Wildcat Family and guests to admire. These students are also recognized as student leaders on the daily announcements.

As a result of raising expectations and focusing on student achievement for social, emotional, and academic success, the percentage of students considered proficient as measured by our state has risen from 26 to 78

percent in English Language Arts (ELA) and from 27 to 59 percent in math.

At St. Charles Elementary, we are reminded daily that we expect nothing less than success, and success is defined as the accomplishment of our goals. Our faculty, staff, students, parents, and community work diligently each day to be better than we were the day before.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Over the past four years, instruction has shifted at St. Charles Elementary School from passive engagement of students to highly engaged, student-centered learning which promotes student collaboration and discussion. Beginning in first grade, students participate in accountable discussions which require them to answer in complete sentences and cite evidence from the text to support their answers. Students use a variety of discussion stems such as, in my opinion, I disagree with you because, and I agree with you because, in order to strengthen their communication skills and to respect the opinions of others. These discussions increase rigor, critical thinking, participation, and responsibility.

We foster independent writers through the consistent implementation of the R.A.C.E.S. writing strategy. This strategy requires students to restate the question, answer the question, cite evidence, explain the answer and summarize. This writing process is first fully implemented in our second grade classrooms and is then built upon in each subsequent grade level. A coherent foundation is established for our school-wide writing expectations by introducing a modified writing process in our kindergarten and first grade classrooms. This school-wide writing approach is also adapted and utilized in our science and social studies classrooms.

A blended approach to ELA instruction helps students build necessary skills to increase reading and comprehension proficiency. During whole-group instruction, all students regularly have access to texts that are at or above their grade level. Students are provided opportunities to formulate their own ideas about these texts and collaborate and discuss these ideas with their peers. Small-group instruction provides students opportunities to practice and build fluency and comprehension skills while utilizing grade level texts or text on their own reading level. Close reading strategies are utilized in both of these instructional settings, and students are expected to examine a text through purposeful repeated readings. Close reading helps build necessary skills in order to engage independently in complex texts. Our kindergarten, first grade, and second grade teachers introduce Close reading through read-alouds, teacher modeling, and think alouds. Third through fifth grade teachers have students engage in the process of Close reading through annotation of texts and answering text-dependent questions.

Lafourche Parish School District has created weekly common district assessments which require students to read complex grade-level fiction and nonfiction passages in order to answer comprehension questions and connect reading and writing standards through a prose constructed response task.

1b. Mathematics:

In following the Louisiana Student Standards for Mathematics, St. Charles Elementary ensures mathematical instruction for the achievement of proficiency guided by three components of rigor: conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application. Most math instruction begins with the development of conceptual understanding. Starting here allows students to understand why a concept is important and in what types of context it is useful. Teachers utilize anchor charts to clearly model new content and to provide students with a visual reference. Regarding the development of procedural skill and fluency, our students develop accuracy and precision in calculations and develop a deeper understanding of requisite knowledge to be able to apply their skills in real world problems. Our most in-depth level of instruction is taught at the level of application. As we teach our students to apply their mathematical knowledge, they begin to think critically using their skills that were previously acquired. Instruction at this level allows them the opportunity to seek solutions through reasoning and modeling and to communicate with peers about math through speaking and writing. Our students achieve proficiency through explicit math instruction which includes teacher modeling, team interaction and discussion, independent perseverance, and one-on-one instruction if necessary.

Extensive feedback is provided by peers and the teacher throughout the learning process. Skills are

continuously being remediated and enriched daily through a research-based online program that monitors student progress and assists in ensuring proficiency of state standards. The sequence of our lessons is dictated by mathematical skills building upon one another based on the breakdown of our curriculum: major content and supporting and additional content. Assessments are strategically aligned with our state standards and are a combination of common district assessments as well as teacher created cumulative assessments which are created and adjusted using student error analysis from previous assessments.

1c. Science:

The Louisiana State Standards for Science require students to apply content knowledge, investigate, evaluate scientifically, reason scientifically, and connect ideas across disciplines. Science and engineering practices progress through grade levels based on student capabilities for each grade band (K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and high school). With guidance from our teachers, our kindergarten through second grade students plan and conduct investigations, collect data, and make observations to determine if one specific object or solution solves the problem. Our third through fifth grade students collaboratively and independently plan and carry out investigations that build on their K-2 scientific experiences. These investigations contain controlled variables that require students to make predictions and test different models to determine successful solutions. At the same time, students are engaged daily in components of authentic literacy. Reading non-fiction material with a purpose, students are challenged to think like a scientist or engineer as they discuss their understanding of the scientific phenomena. Students have opportunities to discuss their hypothesis, investigations, and findings with peers. Our teachers present lessons that engage students in phenomena based learning activities that require students to investigate and explain in their own words, orally and in writing, the science concepts behind the real-world scientific example. Students construct their own questions, research facts, and deliver a reason or solution as the teacher guides them through this scientific process. Students record their ideas in an investigation notebook. Using their laptops, students interact with a simulation tool to complete hands-on investigations and create electronic models of their investigations. Reflection of the lesson occurs through student-led discussion groups which enables students to think, read, write, and argue like real scientists and engineers.

Through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), our science teachers review the Louisiana Science Learning Progression chart. This chart connects the science and engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and the disciplinary core ideas across the grade levels. These discussions have been an invaluable way to connect learning across grade levels. PLC's also allow for the Science teachers to make connections between the Louisiana Student Standards for Science and the Louisiana Standards for Math and ELA. During this collaborative time, science teachers work together to design aligned assessments that require that students apply their scientific knowledge to tasks and utilize stimuli to answer constructed and extended response questions. Students at St. Charles Elementary are enthusiastic and motivated to emulate scientists and engineers while engaging in in-depth science concepts.

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

Social Studies lessons allow students daily opportunities to be immersed in historical reading and are combined with writing strategies to help students develop and express their opinions and claims. Using evidence from multiple sources such as timelines, charts, and historical maps, students use these primary sources to express informed opinions, evaluate information, and connect concepts to background knowledge. Students engage in critical thinking as they construct claims that make connections among people, events, and ideas across place and time. Students develop connections through academic vocabulary, key ideas, and background knowledge introduced through previous grade level standards. For example, government and citizenship is introduced to kindergarteners through their immediate surroundings of family, school and community. Teachers present these topics by reading aloud fiction and nonfiction text. By the time students are in 2nd grade, they are beginning to understand how to develop claims and support these claims from a single source. Our second graders mostly utilize nonfiction text as sources, but begin to shift towards analyzing pictures and websites to support their claims. Our second graders begin to express their claims through discussion and writing as they understand the structure and purpose of government. By the time our students enter the fourth grade, they have a basic understanding of government and citizenship. Their focus shifts to the structure and foundations of a democratic government. Our fourth graders utilize

NBRS 2019

primary and secondary sources to independently support their claims. Students begin to analyze, differentiate, and explain key ideas of governing a new nation while making connections among people, events, and ideas across place and time.

The Louisiana State Standards for Social Studies are integrated throughout the units in order to clarify student understanding and to ensure that students make connections to develop and support claims. This is accomplished by presenting students with an essential question at the beginning of each lesson. This question may connect to previous lessons, or students may have to predict how the lesson will have an impact on future events. At the end of the lesson, students answer the essential question in their interactive journals and discuss with a partner, team, or the class. Setting the purpose for learning at the beginning of the lesson and assessing the same purpose at the end of the lesson provides the student with ownership of their learning. This process also provides the teacher with knowledge of the students' abilities to use sources and their background knowledge of social studies to express informed opinions.

During PLC meetings, teachers collaborate and review the achievement level descriptors for Social Studies. The achievement level descriptors describe the knowledge, skills, and cognitive process that students should exhibit with relative consistency and accuracy. This allows teachers to understand the level of proficiency each student must demonstrate and to create opportunities to increase their skill level.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

Our pre-kindergarten (pre-K) program is driven by the Louisiana Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) which provide a continuum of developmental milestones for each age level. At St. Charles, our pre-K program offers a curriculum that includes appropriate social and emotional standards that are instrumental to the success of early childhood development. Students are observed and assessed through TS GOLD, district benchmarks, and student portfolios, all of which indicate success in primary grades. PLC meetings between our pre-K and our kindergarten teachers ensures students are introduced to common academic vocabulary and procedures for a smooth transition into Kindergarten. Our pre-K program promotes kindergarten readiness and helps students develop social skills and academic skills that are crucial for success in their future education. Students that attend our pre-K program perform better on the Desired Results Developmental Profile for Kindergarten (DRDP-K), which is administered within the first few weeks of kindergarten.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

St. Charles Elementary School focuses on preparing our students for college, career, and citizenship. Our daily mission is for our students to become better students, good citizens, and life-long learners. This is accomplished by incorporating learning opportunities in settings outside of the core classrooms. We provide instructional opportunities in foreign language, technology, music, and character education.

Lafourche Parish School District employs native French teachers from various French-speaking countries to provide instruction. At St. Charles, our French teacher services our first through fifth grade students for 50 minutes two to three times a week. Oral communication is the primary focus on learning a foreign language. Learning begins with basic vocabulary and builds up to simple sentences and beginning conversations in French.

Our French program connects learning to our core classrooms as often as possible. Acquiring French assists students in developing a greater understanding of their own language through grammatical concepts, sentence structure, and vocabulary. Our French program teaches students geographical and cultural perspectives by exposing them to the French culture in our community, in Louisiana, and around the world. These connections enhance and enrich the students' learning of our local history. Daily, students practice the Pledge of Allegiance in French and throughout the year they are invited to say the pledge during announcements. At the end of the school year, a few of our French students are presented the most improved

award or the outstanding French award at our awards ceremony.

We utilize computer lab instruction to connect technology to classroom instruction. Students visit the computer lab two to three times per week for 50 minutes where they concentrate on individualized lessons that focus on either reading comprehension, writing, math fluency, or keyboarding skills. Students work at their own reading levels and are constantly challenged to improve their literacy skills. The online lessons mirror the reading and writing expectations of the classroom with an added element of keyboarding. Keyboarding programs improve typing fluency through digital citizenship lessons. These skills help students incorporate their literacy skills and strategies from paper-based assessments and apply these strategies to computer-based assessments.

St. Charles Elementary School has a beginner's band program. The program consists of 50 minutes of daily band instruction by an itinerant band director and percussion instructor. Approximately 60 percent of our fifth graders participate in our band program. The music program is intended to introduce instrumental music through a solid foundation of basic music theory such as the staff, music notation, rhythms, dynamics, articulation, tempo, and some ear training. The St. Charles student band performs two concerts a year to spotlight their newly acquired skills and to encourage the interest of music in our younger students.

Character education is a proactive effort of our staff to cultivate core values such as respect, responsibility, and self-discipline for students in Pre-K through fifth grade. Our core teachers and our Professional School Counselor model these values through classroom lessons which incorporate real-life scenarios. These lessons connect expectations to our schoolwide Positive Behavior and Intervention Support (PBIS) plan. The lessons focus on modeling the core values in the classroom, cafeteria, bus, and the community. Since our mascot is the Wildcat, our PBIS focus expectations are Come prepared, Act Respectfully, Think responsibly, and Show self-control, which spells out C.A.T.S. Students proudly recite these behavior expectations each morning during announcements. These core values and expectations are not just words recited each morning, but they are daily actions that are required for success.

All of our fifth grade students participate in a Drug Abuse Resistance Education program (D.A.R.E.) through a partnership with the Lafourche Parish Sheriff's Office. The D.A.R.E. program offers an opportunity for our students to connect and extend our PBIS expectations and core values into their daily lives in the community. A local police officer instructs students to lead drug-free, violence-free lives, and to resist peer pressure. Lessons are taught through discussion and role-play that focus on personal consequences of substance abuse and violence. After completing the required lessons and writing a D.A.R.E. report, fifth graders graduate from the program. D.A.R.E. Graduation is a proud moment on our campus.

3. Special Populations:

St. Charles implements a multi-tiered system of support by ensuring that every student learns and achieves at high standards, that learning incorporates both academic and social accomplishments, that every member of the Wildcat Family is responsible for the success of all of our students, and that everyone must continue to learn, grow, and reflect. The RTI (Response to Intervention) decision making process is used to review student data to identify students that are ready for grade level Tier I instruction, or students that do not meet grade level expectations as indicated on the universal screener and now require additional support and intervention through our Tier II and Tier III programs.

Tier II academic support is provided in small group settings for approximately 30 minutes daily and may be held either inside or outside of the core classrooms. This targeted instruction is provided by the core teacher, intervention teacher, or support personnel. The focus of small group instruction is more deliberate and explicit than the whole-group lesson. The Tier II teacher digs deeper into the lesson and provides targeted instruction on only a few strategies and skills at a time. Some lessons may also focus on test corrections and provide teacher modeling, corrective feedback, and targeted practice towards mastery.

If the needs of a student are severe or persistent, students are provided individualized assistance through Tier III instruction for approximately 50 minutes daily. Instruction is provided in an even smaller group setting

outside of the classroom and are provided by the intervention teacher or a special education teacher. Lessons support core instruction while focusing on the skills and strategies needed to fill gaps and provide growth. Students have extensive opportunities for practice, error corrections, and corrective feedback based on the identified area of deficit.

Progress monitoring is a significant component of our successful RTI program. Progress monitoring is conducted every two to three weeks for every Tier II and Tier III student. This process involves Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) probes completed by the core teacher, intervention teacher, or the special education teacher. These CBM probes may include components of the universal screener, core screeners, cold reads, and running records.

Data is reviewed monthly at PLC meetings and RTI meetings to make decisions about student progress in core curriculum and intervention. We discuss the rate of improvement and responsiveness to instruction in order to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Discussions begin with students that are below-grade level expectations and then move to on-grade level students and higher achieving students to ensure all students are reaching their goals. Intervention groups may change based on data and teacher input. Students may be referred for further screenings to determine if a disability is present.

Students that exceed expectations are provided enrichment opportunities through accelerated learning opportunities and small group instruction. Reading, Social Studies, and Science teachers introduce students to advanced complex texts and Close reading strategies. Math teachers provide accelerated learning opportunities and allow students to apply knowledge and skills to real-life examples. Our students in the Gifted Program focus on advanced vocabulary, logic and rebus puzzles, and above current grade level content that requires problem solving and perseverance.

St. Charles Elementary School is making strides in closing the achievement gap as we focus on improving learning for all students through high expectations, using student performances to inform instruction and intervention, and to guarantee that every member of the Wildcat family takes responsibility to assist and encourage all students to reach their goals. We expect nothing less than success!

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

St. Charles Elementary School (SCES) is a welcoming, safe, and orderly learning environment that nurtures respect, pride, high expectations, and celebration of success. Students are eager to learn, and our staff's encouraging voices are evident daily throughout our campus. Since we are a small community school, our staff knows all of the students and their families. Generations of families have attended SCES and all have Wildcat Pride.

Our school day begins with students and the principal leading our invigorating morning announcements. During the announcements, students quote the Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS) expectations: At St. Charles we are CATS. We are Safe, Act respectfully, Think responsibly, and Show self-control. These expectations set the tone for all actions of the entire school day. Students are recognized through personalized "Shout-Outs" for their hard work to reach academic goals such as mastering kindergarten sight words or reaching math or reading goals. Students are also recognized for going above and beyond our behavior expectations and reaching "TOP CAT" on the daily expectations chart. These "TOP CATS" proudly walk around campus wearing a gold crown. The entire school-community celebrates this accomplishment. Announcements end with the principal setting the tone for the day as she reminds students to, "make today awesome," and, "make me proud!"

At St. Charles we have instilled pride in our students, staff, and families. This includes pride in accomplishments, pride in progress, and pride in one another which encourages a strong personal connection with our school. This deep sense of pride is established by the students and staff having ownership and control of their learning, and having their ideas matter. Students enthusiastically share their daily academic and social-emotional accomplishments and also proudly share success stories of their peers. Staff members are encouraged to write shout outs for students and for fellow staff members. These shout outs are placed in the weekly staff memo and are part of nomination for the Employee of the Month. At St. Charles, the mindset is to be proactive with praise and encouragement rather than always being reactive with negative consequences. This leads to celebrating progress, perseverance, and accomplishments for both our students and staff.

Since high expectations are the norm on the campus of St. Charles Elementary School and all students and staff recognize what excellence looks like, everyone is willing to support each other and are willing to take risks. Staff and students take pride in their accomplishments, have high expectations for their own learning, and accept the requirement to persevere. The power of celebrating small wins increases motivation, self-confidence, and pride.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At St. Charles Elementary, we believe that student achievement and success is a shared responsibility of students, staff, parents, and the community. We embrace supportive relationships with our families in order to ensure student achievement. We begin our process with a transition meeting in May to allow for parents to meet next year's teachers and to ease their concerns about the expectations in the next grade level. Before the start of the school year SCES hosts a meet and greet day where parents and students visit their new classrooms and meet the new teachers. Parents have thanked us for both of these opportunities to keep the transition process stress free. Throughout the school year, students lead activities for their parents through our Title I parental engagement academic workshops. This assists parents in understanding the standards and strategies through the work of their own children.

At St. Charles Elementary, we understand that time is limited for some parents and they may not be able to attend functions at school, and yet they still have great interest in being partners with the school. We have several methods to keep parents informed and involved in the learning process. We have a website that includes a Google calendar with events, activities, and news that parents can access. We also have a Facebook page that is updated regularly with celebrations of student success and information regarding

important day-to-day information. Parents and teachers also communicate through phone conferences and student agendas which provide parents with information on upcoming assessments, homework, and daily social emotional progress.

Our community members are an extension of our Wildcat Family. Our local volunteer fire department provides lessons and presentations to our students during Fire Prevention Week. Many of the firemen have children at our school, live in our community, and are Alumni of St. Charles. Another powerful partnership is with the local NAACP. Yearly, the leaders from the NAACP provide inspirational speakers during our Black History Program. This year we were honored to have the campus ministry team and Melody Knights brass band from St. Augustine High School in New Orleans present our students with a walk through the history of African American music. The program ended with our students participating in an authentic New Orleans second line around the cafeteria. We also have the pleasure of partnering with the Nicholls State University (NSU) College of Education. NSU education students gain teaching experience through classroom observations and teaching lessons in our classrooms. NSU education students and athletes volunteer at our PBIS parties and Family Fun Day.

Students have opportunities to give back to our community as members of the 4-H Club and Early Act Club. These youngsters bring holiday cards to hospitals, participate in bingo at nursing homes, create care packages for those serving our country overseas, and plant and harvest at the St. Francis Community Vegetable Garden. We take pride in strengthening the family ties of our community through these clubs.

3. Professional Development:

Learning Communities (PLC) and at the district level through content area cohorts.

Since St. Charles Elementary is such a small school with only two classes per grade level, the structure of our PLCs shifted to vertical PLCs in order to allow collaboration of our content area experts. Vertical PLCs require a schedule change so that teachers of the same content area can collaborate to have academic conversations every other week for 75 minutes with each meeting ending with an assignment to be completed before the next PLC. Vertical collaboration provides teachers the ability to speak to specific standards and follow the progression through the grade levels. Teachers now have a better understanding of the academic expectations of the grade level below and above theirs. This allows teachers to plan for students who have gaps in their learning and enrich students who are already proficient. Vertical PLCs also allow for aligned implementation of school-wide strategies such as our R.A.C.E.S. writing strategy and the use of anchor charts in math. There are times that the cohorts for the vertical PLCs vary due to the topic. At times the reading and social studies teachers meet to collaborate on writing expectations and strategies for reading nonfiction complex texts. Vertical PLCs also are instrumental in reviewing student performance data on district common assessments, and then using that data to create plans to address the standards across all grade levels. This process allows teachers to become active and engaged in their development. Additionally, the learning is directly connected to improving professional practice which directly impacts the achievement of their students.

The principal is provided district level and state level professional development during the summer and throughout the school year. The topics focus on district and state initiatives that focus on curriculum resources, use of student performance data, and improving student achievement on state tests.

District level professional development is driven by the district elementary school leadership team. The district schedules full days for teachers to collaborate throughout the school year. At times the district elementary curriculum specialists will provide professional learning to our school teacher leaders, and the teacher leaders redeliver the information during vertical PLCs. At times a district elementary curriculum specialist is invited to join our vertical PLCs to act as an added expert in the conversation.

Professional development at St. Charles Elementary School is an essential component of school improvement. Vertical PLCs provide a meaningful and collaborative learning experience that directly impacts instruction, learning, and assessment.

4. School Leadership:

Four years ago, a new principal was appointed at St. Charles Elementary School. This resulted in a change in the culture, a change in the mindset for our students and staff, and a shift to student-centered learning. The vision and leadership style of our principal has resulted in a focus on high expectations for all students.

Our school leader believes in respect, pride, high expectations, and celebration of success, and this has transformed the culture of the school. Positive relationships are a vital component in success. Each day you find the principal with students giving them hugs and high-fives, reminding them of the expectations, reminding them of their potential, and celebrating daily success in academics and personal social-emotional goals. The powerful part of these relationships is that students approach the principal and enthusiastically want to share their accomplishments. It often delays bus dismissal due to the number of students that want to share their success stories before leaving campus. The principal believes that a student can accomplish any goal as long as the student receives consistent high expectations and support from devoted adults.

Due to the size of the school, St. Charles Elementary only has one administrator, the principal. In order to help prioritize instructional leadership while also managing the day-to-day operation of the school, our principal created a leadership team in order to empower others to carry out the vision of the school. Today, the leadership team consists of highly effective teachers that are trusted and respected by students, staff, and families. The leadership team reviews data, sets goals for the school, and defines our expectations of highly effective planning, assessments, classroom management, student discussions, and student engagement. Leadership team members ensure that all stakeholders understand the purpose for our expectations, procedures, or strategies, and then they always provide support.

The principal empowers the leadership team and the teachers to make decisions, and this increases their leadership roles. Teachers feel supported and take ownership of student learning and results in their classrooms. This then leads to teachers empowering their students to lead and take ownership of their learning. Through shared ownership, St. Charles Elementary School works collaboratively to insist on high expectations for all which results in student growth and achievement for all.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At St. Charles Elementary, we believe that our process of test correction and error analysis across our core curriculum has made a significant impact on student learning. Making mistakes is an integral component of learning, and we want to utilize those mistakes to create additional learning opportunities for students by addressing both mistakes in content and skill. This process allows for student self-reflection, collaboration between teacher and student, and student to student discussion through use of peer teammates.

Once math assessments are graded, assessments are returned to students with an error analysis cover sheet attached. This document contains a listing of common mathematical errors. Students rework their mistakes either independently or with help from teachers or teammates. They then categorize their errors on the cover sheet by placing the item number next to the error type. Once all corrections are made, student and teacher analyze the types of errors made and engage in math conversations about plans to address those errors. Sometimes, students come to the realization that their error is simply a careless one, such as transferring answers incorrectly. Other times, they come to the realization that their knowledge of the skill was limited and remediation is necessary. Over the course of completing these corrections, students have the opportunity to compare their analysis sheets to past assessments to see if their pattern of errors has been corrected. Also, data gleaned from this strategy drives the development of teacher created, on-going cumulative assessments in order to continue to develop mastery of skills.

English Language Arts (ELA) test corrections are facilitated by the teacher in collaboration with the school's interventionist. The interventionist meets with students during their ELA lessons to complete test corrections in a small group setting. Teachers have created an item analysis document which focuses on essential skills. This document is used to give feedback pertaining to the assessment. The interventionist uses this document to address errors with students. Through that discussion, the interventionist reteaches the skill or strategy. Test corrections ensure that the test is not only an assessment but also an important part of the learning process.

There are multiple benefits for using the test corrections and error analysis process in all core subjects. It ensures that assessments are used effectively as a teaching tool. It drives the cohesiveness of cumulative testing and gives teachers the ability to maintain the pacing of their curriculum while also reteaching and remediating. As a result, the entirety of the curriculum is taught leaving no gaps in instruction between grade levels.