

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Mrs. Carly McPherson

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

Official School Name Ann Letort Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 561 Letort Road

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

Washington Boro PA 17582-9619
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Lancaster County

Telephone (717) 872-9530

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Web site/URL https://letort.pennmanor.net

E-mail carly.mcpherson@pennmanor.net

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Michael Leichter

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail mike.leichter@pennmanor.net

District Name Penn Manor School District Tel. (717) 872-9500

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. J. Kenneth Long

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

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

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

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 10 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	17	26	43
1	20	25	45
2	26	20	46
3	19	18	37
4	20	34	54
5	19	20	39
6	19	22	41
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	140	165	305

*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
 - 1 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 8 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 86 % White
 - 2 % 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: 8%

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	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	8
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	25
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	300
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.08
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

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):

Chinese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, French, Swahili, Spanish, and Turkish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 31%
Total number students who qualify: 95

8. Students receiving special education services: 13 %
39 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>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>17</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>3</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>2</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
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.	13
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
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 23:1

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	97%	97%	96%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

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

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

Yes No

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

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

Letort develops a love of learning while embracing unique talents in a safe, challenging, respectful and supportive community emphasizing leadership, excellence, trustworthiness, optimism, responsibility, and teamwork.

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

Letort Elementary School is recognized as a small, close-knit community located in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. A total of 315 students, in grades kindergarten through sixth, call Letort home. This high-achieving elementary school has two classes per grade level in first through sixth grade, with an AM and PM kindergarten class. Collaboration between all staff members, both professional and support, is instrumental to the academic success of our students. The entire staff is dedicated to creating a safe and challenging environment for students to grow socially, emotionally, and academically. Every individual goes above and beyond on a daily basis. This welcoming community is the result of strong communication and involvement between staff, students, and parents with the same goal in mind--meeting the needs of students.

Over the past five years, there has been a shift in Letort's demographics. Since 2013, we have had a 9 percent increase in economically disadvantaged students as well as an increase of 6 percent in the diversity of students. Additionally, the change in family structure has directly impacted many children at Letort. All staff members have modified instructional practices and strategies in efforts to meet the diverse backgrounds, cultural differences, and differing learning styles of our students. Most importantly, staff members recognize the significance of building strong relationships with students.

The staff realizes the importance of supporting and depending on one another and are encouraged to assume shared-leadership roles by administration in order to advance students and their achievement. We have learned to work together as a team committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and enriching learning environment for our students. Our principal values the professional judgement of the staff and grants teachers the autonomy to make instructional decisions that will best meet the differing needs of the students. The curriculum we use was developed by classroom teachers in accordance with Pennsylvania Standards and eligible content and is enhanced by our staff's diverse teaching styles.

As we strive to meet the changing needs of our students, we have utilized multiple resources, including Millersville University for outside academic support opportunities; Ag (agriculture) in the Classroom, presented by Penn Manor high school students and community farmers to enhance the third-grade curriculum; and nonprofit organizations to support the social/emotional development of our students. Guest speakers, field trips, and assemblies provide opportunities to make the curriculum hands-on, engaging, and extend beyond the classroom walls. Examples include a guest speaker from the PA Resources Council to provide expertise in the area of ecology and environmental study; field trips to local attractions, such as our state capitol, the Fulton Opera House, and Gettysburg National Military Park; and engaging assemblies related to the curriculum being taught within the different grade levels.

Letort recognizes the need to nurture the development of our students to become well-rounded community members. Letort has always promoted positive character traits in our students. Currently, the focus for our students is leadership, overall excellence, trustworthiness, optimism, responsibility and teamwork. Students who exhibit these characteristics are recognized from each classroom during our monthly all-school assemblies. At these assemblies, staff members wear T-shirts that display the character traits. Letort students strive to do well and are dedicated to their achievement, which stems from relationships built with all staff members. Through these relationships, students begin to develop a greater sense of compassion for others. Intermediate students partner with younger "buddies" to help with spelling words, math facts, and reading skills. Our students also have the opportunity to participate in Jump Rope for Heart, which supports the American Heart Association. Our school seeks to provide opportunities for our students to reach beyond themselves and lend a hand to help others.

Letort also cultivates the special gifts our students possess to help them develop greater confidence. Our school offers an organized band and chorus program that meets weekly for interested students in the intermediate grades. An annual talent show, organized by the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), allows students to showcase a talent that is unique to them. The informational technology (IT) specialist coordinates a technology club for interested participants, who then become technology leaders in our classrooms. Our hallway walls display student artwork, writing samples, photographs, and extension

projects. All of these avenues afford students the opportunity to take pride in their accomplishments.

Letort values the importance of families in the success of our students, and we strive to maintain a close connection with families. Through phone calls, emails, and meetings, teachers remain in constant communication with parents. Our PTO also organizes events that encourage family and staff involvement. Laps for Letort is an annual event that promotes an active, healthy lifestyle and allows the school community to come together. Community involvement is an integral component to helping our students feel safe. We invite Manor Township police officers to our school, and they are often seen in our lunchroom and hallways interacting with students to develop a positive, non-threatening relationship. Our police officers also lead an assembly on bullying for our primary grades. Additionally, members of the local fire department speak to students about fire safety.

It is evident how individuals at Letort and throughout the community are vested in the education of every Letort student; and truly personifies how it takes a village to raise a child!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Our English Language Arts (ELA) program is based on the Pennsylvania Core Standards. All teachers and administrators throughout the district aligned our reading program, StoryTown, to the standards. StoryTown is used to introduce on-level reading concepts and skills. Teachers incorporate trade books for book clubs and guided reading instruction to provide enrichment and intervention. Our building is equipped with two book rooms, ranging in levels from kindergarten through eighth grade. This promotes differentiation and allows teachers to select books above and below their grade level.

Writing instruction is implemented throughout the day in all content areas. Students are given concise expectations and opportunities for self-reflection through the writing process. Students take pride and ownership in their writing as they view their work throughout the building.

Using school-wide reading assessments, classroom teachers, the special education teacher, the academic support teacher, and the principal meet regularly to determine the needs of students and choose research-based programs to provide growth in learning. The analysis of assessment data is utilized to guide classroom ELA instruction and create flexible groups that target specific student needs. Additionally, small groups meet during our daily 30-minute Enrichment-Intervention (EI) time, instructed by a variety of support personnel. Students are then monitored to determine growth toward their individual goal. Students are monitored based on performance and re-grouped accordingly.

Our school promotes a love of reading through a variety of activities. A Vocabulary Parade, summer reading incentives, a school-wide end-of-year book swap, as well as a yearly Book Fair coordinated by our supportive Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) all help to promote a love of learning and reading.

1b. Mathematics:

Letort Elementary implemented the PA Core Curriculum in grades K-6 beginning with the 2014-2015 school year. Standards in each grade build on each other, rather than repeat year after year. Each grade level is organized into four domains: Numbers and Operations, Algebraic Concepts, Measurement, and Geometry. Curriculum documents and resources are accessible to all teachers through our district Moodle page. My Math by McGraw Hill is utilized strictly as a resource to our curriculum.

A variety of instructional strategies are utilized across Letort to integrate our curriculum. Constant collaboration among grade levels, across grade levels, and with academic support teachers allows us to ensure that we are implementing instructional strategies that best suit the strengths of the teachers and the needs of the students. Regardless of how instruction is delivered, each grade level maintains high academic expectations for students. Some instructional approaches we utilize are a rotational model, Concrete Representational Abstract (CRA), and manipulatives. Students have a 90-minute block for math, which allows us to present the material in a variety of ways to meet the needs of all students.

Assessments are used to determine if we are reaching all students. Our district assessments have evolved from textbook-aligned assessments (2014 and 2015) to standards-aligned assessments (2016 to the present). Teacher committees were formed to begin assessment revisions, and final revisions were implemented by the district math supervisor. Final revisions are 100 percent aligned to eligible content per state standards. The assessments are tagged with the reflected eligible content number. A composition document is available to all teachers to show the breakdown of the assessment by eligible content. In recognition of a lack of a math screener and/or intervention program, Letort has implemented two pilot programs (Math DIBELS 2017-2018/2018-2019 and Spring Math 2018-2019).

Letort uses the data collected from these assessments, as well as data from Classroom Diagnostic Tools

(CDT) and the Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVASS), to ensure that all students' needs are being met. Grade levels meet with administrators and academic support teachers to determine the greatest needs. This information is used to determine student grouping and content during our 30-minute daily Enrichment and Intervention time (EI). In addition to small-group instruction during EI, our academic support teacher provides small-group instruction based on grade level academic needs during math instruction. Additionally, we have push-in academic support and learning support during our math instruction time.

1c. Science:

Letort teachers find it extremely important to build excitement and love of learning in all academic areas, including science. Teachers go above and beyond to create hands-on opportunities, such as creative experiments, bringing in community members for Agriculture in the Classroom, and including resources from our local area such as farmers, university students and professors, and supplies donated by businesses. Letort Elementary School builds in extracurricular activities, such as science assemblies, Pennsylvania Resources Council presentations and the Science Expo to further students' enjoyment and engagement in science learning. The school Parent-Teacher Organization developed a nature habitat for classrooms to enjoy and experience natural science and supplies classroom teachers with a science closet full of consumables to use for experiments and activities. The closet is full of traditional science items like plastic beakers, soil sifters and magnets, as well as non-traditional items such as pipe cleaners, paper plates, foil and balloons that can be used for plenty of science activities.

In 2015, the Elementary Science Committee, in collaboration with high school and middle school teachers, introduced a new curriculum for kindergarten through grade six. Based on Pennsylvania Core Standards and the four content strands that are addressed at the secondary levels (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Earth and Space Science), each grade level was given a new scope and sequence that incorporated the scientific process, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) design, and a hands-on approach to scientific experimentation. Teachers integrate real-world application, problem solving, and a multimedia approach to build background knowledge and develop an inquiry-based love of science. Grade levels perform states of matter experiments (ex. Root beer Floats), Energy Experiments (ex. Electrical Circuits and creating Electromagnets), Plant and Animal Experiments (ex. Edible Model Cells, growing seeds in multiple materials, and creating a greenhouse) as well as activities related to our planet (ex. shake tables and rock cycle fudge). Applied engineering, a separate specialist area, is also integrated one semester each year at all grade levels to further emphasize problem solving, future career choices in science and the "four-C's" (collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and communication) of 21st century learning.

Yearly, PSSA (Pennsylvania System of School Assessment) science results are analyzed to identify areas of weakness and gaps in the curriculum. Teachers from each grade level collaborate to address these gaps and make adjustments and revisions to the curriculum annually. Teachers at Letort have used this information to improve our academic growth as reported in the 2018 Science assessments.

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

The social studies curriculum at Letort Elementary School emphasizes instruction in citizenship, geography, economics, government, and history. Our social studies curriculum was created and developed by a committee of elementary teachers within the district and is aligned with the Pennsylvania core standards and is often integrated across all curricular areas.

A priority at Letort is developing good citizens within our school community. All students are held to high expectations, regardless of socioeconomic status, disability, or ethnicity. However, we acknowledge that each student brings unique strengths and needs that we must support within our school. Students are reminded daily of our school's expectations as citizens of Letort through the acronym L-E-T-O-R-T: L is for leadership, E is for excellence, T is for trustworthiness, O is for optimism, R is for responsibility, and T is for teamwork. In addition, we have a Peacemakers program in first grade, which encourages good citizenship traits among students and promotes healthy relationships.

While the district provides us with curriculum, the teachers have the autonomy to utilize the materials and methods that address the specific learning needs of our students. These may include educational media, authentic texts, speakers, and technology in order to bring a variety of perspectives to the subject matter. Lessons are developed according to individual student needs and are taught using a variety of modalities to meet all students' learning styles. Students are challenged and engaged through participation in collaboration, hands-on activities, discovery, and project based learning. For example, students create timelines to help organize information in a chronological sequence so that they can better understand change, recurring events, and key events of historical significance. A former Letort teacher visits classrooms to share his knowledge of historical events like the Revolutionary and Civil War. Teachers extend student learning through the use of field trips to Washington D.C., Harrisburg, PA and Gettysburg, PA, where students are given the opportunity to have an engaging educational experience.

Students are assessed using a variety of methods including multiple choice, short answer, extended responses, performance based, project based, and verbal responses. Assessments are individualized and adapted to address the learning needs of our students and support the acquisition of skills.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Within the curriculum areas of applied engineering, art, music, and physical education, the programs at Letort serve all students in first through sixth grade. Our school operates on a four-day cycle, and students meet with each instructional specialist once every four days, for a forty-five minute period. The programs are aligned with the Pennsylvania Department of Education State Standards.

Our physical education program focuses very intentionally on promoting social and emotional health and well-being for all students through a growth mindset approach, which allows all students to focus on their own individual improvement in skills performance – even when participating in team activities. This encourages the building of self-belief, self-confidence and self-esteem, which can be transferred and further fortified in the core subject classrooms. Not only can students feel good about themselves because of what they believe they can do and what they have achieved in physical education, the physical and mental stimulation they experience primes their brains to continue to engage in successful learning in other classroom environments.

Lessons in our Applied Engineering program are aligned with both national standards and content within the science, technology, engineering, art and math standards. The goal of our curriculum in Applied Engineering is to teach students the design process, develop problem solving/critical thinking skills, and allow students to exercise their ability to work in teams to develop a design or product that meets a specific want or need. Students are offered the opportunity to tie in skills learned in other content areas and apply those skills to real-world problems. Interconnecting our curriculum provides students with introductory knowledge and increased confidence in their ability to understand some of the more challenging concepts in their regular classrooms. We strive to foster creativity, critical thinking, application of design/engineering, and other key skills that students' may use in their future college careers and/or the workforce. We want every student to be confident in his or her ability to work through real life problems both individually and as a team member and be able to continuously strive for developing and improving skills.

Music is designed to engage students in activities that encourage intentional and discerning listening, tuneful and expressive singing, and rhythmic movement and performance. Instruction includes listening, singing, moving, playing instruments, creating, improvising, reading, notating, and evaluating. Music class fosters the development of musical skill and appreciation. We establish a safe space for trying new things, and an

attitude that mistakes are a normal part of learning. We discover music of other times and cultures, learning to appreciate how something different can be interesting and good. Singing and playing help children gain a love of music. They also develop spatial-temporal reasoning, which transfers easily to other areas. Singing with others, students enjoy and express themselves making music, while improving reading fluency and language skills. Working in ensembles with other musicians gives each student a sense of importance, contributing to the whole, and shared success, as well as nurturing growth in social development. It also provides ample opportunity to listen and respond to others, temper independence for the sake of the group, and share success as a team. These skills easily transfer to other areas of group work, problem solving, and recognizing differing skills and the importance of diversity to group success.

The Letort art curriculum places emphasis on the development of artistic skills and understanding of important historical moments, while also permitting a great amount of student choice in the artistic process. Collaboration between students in projects and art critiques encourages social and emotional development in which proper peer-to-peer conversation is modeled and fostered in every lesson. Students are assessed on the acquisition and demonstration of skills, as well as their active participation in discussion and creation. Student choice plays an integral role in the art class, as this flexibility in materials or subject matter allows students to demonstrate core artistic skills while maintaining a strong interest in their artwork. Students are able to bring their curiosities or prior knowledge into the art classroom and are provided with an environment to explore and develop as an individual. All students, including students with exceptionalities, are assessed on their growth and independent achievements, providing equal opportunities for students to demonstrate their success. This individualized approach maintains a positive environment that encourages the development of self-confidence, curiosity, and community skills that students are able to take with them beyond the art classroom.

3. Special Populations:

Assessment, instruction, and intervention for students from special populations (Academic Support, Learning Support, Gifted Instruction, Speech-Language Therapy and English Language Learners) are tailored to students' identified individual needs. School-wide assessments are administered to identify the specific needs of each student. These needs are addressed during daily Enrichment and Intervention time (EI) in which all students participate. As skills are mastered, students are moved to new groups with different skill focuses and expectations. Growth is measured with consistent and frequent progress monitoring. All teachers and staff are involved in the delivery of EI services, including specialists, classroom teachers and building aides. The Academic Support Teacher (AST) and the classroom teacher choose specific research-based interventions for those students whose scores fall below benchmark. Communication between classroom teachers, the academic support team and specialists is frequent and specific. For example, those students with speech-language disabilities who are performing below grade level in reading, the Academic Support teacher and the Speech-Language Therapist coordinate efforts for assessment and intervention recognizing that speech-language difficulties may impact acquisition of early literacy skills. For students who are receiving English as a Second Language (ESL) services, AST may provide specific interventions to enhance the attainment of needed concepts and skills.

Using an inclusion model of learning support, students who are one to two grade levels below the national average receive core instruction within the general education classroom and additionally receive small group remediation of deficit skill areas within that setting. This model is utilized to focus on grade level standards and bridge the gap while providing necessary instruction to address specific skill deficits. Students in the bottom 10th percentile in any core academic category receive small group of 1:1 replacement instruction. Research-based programs build on their strengths and learning styles.

Students with above grade level performance are screened for giftedness. Assessments considered in the screening are the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT), Classroom Diagnostic Test (CDT), curriculum benchmarks, Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement - Third Edition (KTEA-3), Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children- Fifth Edition (WISC-5) and the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). Additionally, teacher and parent narrative input is considered. If the team of educators and parents determines that the student is in need of gifted services, a Gifted Individual Educational Plan (GIEP) is written. The GIEP is a strength-based document and the student's goals are tailored to their areas of

academic strength. Students with a GIEP are provided with special class times to work with other gifted peers including those from other schools in the Penn Manor School District. During this class time, students are provided a rigorous gifted curriculum. Students participate in hands-on activities to solve real-world problems. Sample problems from this school year include: building a better snow shovel, repurposing a common item in the school/house, building a catapult, and designing a special chair for various individual needs.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Letort creates an environment in which all students feel valued and accepted from the moment they enter the building each morning. Students are greeted by staff with a friendly smile as well as inquiries about students' interests and home life. Children develop such a strong connection with the Letort staff that many former students have returned to visit. Each year, we extend an invitation to graduating high school seniors who attended Letort for our "Graduation Walk" through the school in caps and gowns, and many eagerly participate, with current students cheering them on.

Throughout the year, there is a conscious effort to develop and maintain strong relationships with students. During the 2017 school year, many teachers participated in a dialogue group based on the text written by Kim Bearden entitled *Crash Courses: The Life Lessons My Students Taught Me*. Beliefs shared in the text emanate throughout the hallways and classrooms at Letort. Students are continually teaching staff members the importance of forming relationships, building resiliency, following dreams, and finding meaning in our personal and professional lives. During our monthly dialogue sessions, teachers discussed, reflected on and shared thoughts and ideas on how to support one another and the students of Letort. From this, new ideas were implemented in classrooms and throughout the building to enhance student and staff relationships. For example, many classrooms participated in random acts of kindness. Additionally, students were invited to eat lunch with their classroom teacher, where conversations focused on life outside of school. Also, students are afforded the opportunity to share in the classroom what makes them unique. From the culture we are creating, students grow confident in their capabilities, which allows them the freedom to take risks without fear of failing. Furthermore, students are encouraged to seek within themselves their individual strengths and utilize those strengths in their accomplishments.

All staff make a conscious effort to connect with one another throughout the school day. Daily, teachers are engaging in conversations with one another on a personal level--often before entering their own classrooms. Staff members are comfortable with one another, knowing that they will be supported and appreciated. Special area teachers, who may share multiple buildings, often feel disconnected from staff, but at Letort, there is a definite sense of being a contributing and valued member of the school team. As a community, we make an effort to be with one another through such activities as our pot-luck luncheons, where we encourage everyone to take the time to connect in a warm environment. Many staff members meet after school to exercise and decompress from the day by walking through the Letort community. In addition, staff members schedule time outside the school day to have fun through kayaking adventures, bike hikes, and field trips.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

LeTort Elementary is very successful due to our connections with families and community members. Our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) actively engages students and families in a variety of ways. First, the PTO organizes multiple fundraisers to finance educational assemblies and field trips, which enhances our students' background knowledge. PTO also provides social engagements for families such as picnics, movies, roller skating parties, and dances, which helps to strengthen the school-community connection. To encourage the importance of reading, the PTO pays for each student to self-select an independent reading book during the Book Fair. All of these activities make school a fun and positive learning environment.

Communication is an important component to keep our families and communities informed about special activities as well as events/assignments/curriculum about each classroom. Not only do we have a school blog, each grade level has one as well to promote school and community events. Teachers are in constant communication through conferences with parents, phone calls, and emails. Parents and students can access their grades through Sapphire, our online grading system. We value attendance for our students' success by contacting parents when their child is absent from school.

Student achievement is supported in multiple ways. Within the school, intermediate students are often

paired with primary students to support academic subjects by providing peer tutoring daily. Schoolwide, we have a Vocabulary Parade to celebrate the importance of vocabulary acquisition as well as provide a fun activity for our students. We encourage students to develop their reading skills over the summer by participating in the Summer Reading Challenge, which ends with a family pool party. Previous students who attend high school often come back to coach students for the district's math bowl in grades four through six and also organize activities for the Dr. Seuss Read Across America Read-a-thon.

LeTort is not just a school, it's a family. We care about each student and our community in a variety of ways. For example, due to the demographics of our district, we collect items to provide a Thanksgiving and Christmas meal. We collect cans for the local food bank and provide clothing through donations to support our community members. This year, we faced a difficult situation with a student with a terminal illness, which prompted us to hold a St. Jude fundraiser by decorating our classroom doors. Creating this family environment lets students know how important their social, emotional, and physical health is to community of Letort. This strong sense of belonging in our students leads to academic success.

3. Professional Development:

The teachers and the administrator of Letort certainly qualify as life-long learners, and we instill this love of learning in our students. A key component of our learning is the professional development opportunities afforded the staff throughout the school year. District-level administrators often determine the composition of the in-services days for teachers based on yearly survey results, analysis of building and district-level data, and needs identified through teacher observations and walk-throughs of instruction.

The focus of professional development this past year was the introduction and implementation of the new English Language Arts curriculum in grades 4 and 6 and technology training to support a new 1:1 laptop initiative for grades 5 and 6. Also, all teachers in kindergarten through grade 5 participated in a two-day intensive training on the concrete, representational, and abstract (CRA) structure for math instruction provided by the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PATTAN), which provided teachers with valuable information on how students acquire and understand mathematical concepts. This model of instruction is often observed throughout classrooms during math and has been fundamental in Letort's academic achievement.

In addition to district-level professional development, monthly faculty meetings are opportunities for teachers and staff to learn and grow. Often, the principal will collaborate with other elementary principals on specific topics, which stem from previous learning or are a follow-up to in-service topics, for these meetings. It is also essential to celebrate our successes, so the principal will often ask grade level teachers to share proud professional moments with other staff members, which encourages a strong collaborative environment. Furthermore, during grade level data discussions, time is set aside for professional learning to ensure responsive instruction and addresses areas of need evident through the review of student data. The building administrator facilitates these professional development sessions. Not only do they ensure a synergetic approach to meeting students' academic needs, these sessions also foster an environment of learning and growing as a school community. Substantial professional development opportunities, as determined by the teachers, staff, and most importantly, the students, have been instrumental in Letort closing the achievement gap.

4. School Leadership:

While Letort Elementary School is a warm and welcoming environment, the community has set high expectations for all students. The goal of all of the stakeholders is to ensure that all students are encouraged to reach their potential regardless of their background. There is a strong sense of community amongst all stakeholders as well as shared leadership with staff and students. Daily, throughout the halls of Letort, intermediate students are supporting primary students in the attainment of necessary reading and math skills and staff members are constantly dialoguing and reflecting on current practices, students, and instructional strategies. Everyone cares for one another and the success of the building and its students.

The leadership style of the current principal is characterized by visibility in all facets of the instructional

day. On a daily basis, the principal is greeting students as they enter the building, in classrooms observing educators and instruction, and in the cafeteria and playground, building relationships with students. It is not often that the principal is in the office as this individual embraces a hands-on approach to leading. The principal is considered an instructional leader, advocate of students and staff, and facilitator of relationships with parents and community members.

A fundamental characteristic for improving student achievement is professional development and the principal facilitates multiple opportunities throughout the school year to support the advancement in the understanding in data analysis and instructional strategies for Letort educators. Recently, the principal led comprehensive grade level meetings analyzing PVAAS data in the areas of English Language Arts and math for grades four through six. Teams concentrated on vertical and horizontal growth in student achievement as well as a comparison of last year's PVAAS data to the previous three years of student achievement data. Furthermore, grade level data teams discussed and reflected upon teacher specific data from 2017 and 2018 to determine what instructional strategies were effective in improving student performance.

Grade level data meetings are essential to improving student achievement. The principal, the academic support and learning support teachers, and grade level teachers meet bi-monthly to analyze and establish an action plan for students in each grade level. Multiple data sources are used to identify specific areas of strength and improvement and the team organizes student groups according to the data analysis to provide targeted instruction during our enrichment and intervention time. Students are monitored during the eight-week time period and then the team reconvenes to determine our next course of action to continuously improve student achievement.

A strong sense of shared responsibility for student achievement has been the rule for Letort Elementary School. This model has guided Letort to success in closing the achievement gap in our students.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Letort Elementary School prides itself on establishing strong relationships, and we believe this is the key factor in our academic success. As a staff, we feel that creating a safe, comfortable, and trusting environment for our students fosters academic growth and learning. Our staff shows students they are valued by greeting them at classroom doors daily and sending them off with a wave as the buses depart. Staff members recognize students for academic and character growth through individual classroom behavior management systems and monthly school-wide assemblies. Additionally, it is a Letort tradition to have a transition time where students meet their teacher for next year on the last day of school. This activity lessens anxiety and allows students to feel more comfortable beginning a new school year. Furthermore, staff members build relationships with students and their families by attending extracurricular activities throughout the community.

Our staff not only values student relationships, but relationships with each other as well. We believe it is vital to the academic success of our students for us to build and maintain collaborative relationships among all staff members. Team-building activities begin each school year. For example, for the start of the 2018-2019 school year, Letort teachers participated in a team scavenger hunt in Lancaster city. We support these relationships by recognizing one another through “positivity partners.” Willing participants are assigned an individual and encouraged to provide uplifting comments and small tokens of appreciation to their partner throughout the school year. Another example of nurturing relationships is the faculty shout-out board, which recognizes the accomplishments of the Letort staff.

Having meaningful relationships with parents is essential to student success. As a staff, we foster these relationships through open communication with families. Every classroom teacher highlights classroom events, curricular information, and important announcements through blogs or weekly newsletters. Parent volunteers, retired teachers, and former parents/grandparents are a constant presence in our classrooms to assist with student academic success. Teachers take an active role in our PTO by attending meetings and events. In turn, our PTO provides special activities throughout the year for our staff, including breakfasts, lunches, and week-long celebration of teachers and staff in May.

As we partner together with our Letort community with a common goal of meeting the differing needs of students, children replicate the behaviors with each other. Students take leadership roles in supporting each other’s academic success. Every year, sixth-grade students are given opportunities to work with younger students on areas of academic need. Additionally, our third-grade students buddy up with our kindergarteners to complete a variety of curricular activities. In fourth and fifth grade, students support one another in practicing math fluency daily during Spring Math. Currently, we are nurturing student relationships by encouraging our fifth- and sixth-graders to facilitate and develop vocabulary activities, like charades and picture illustrations for grade level specific words, for primary students for our annual Vocabulary Parade.

It is evident that the relationships between students, staff, and the Letort community promote academic growth and play an essential role in closing the achievement gap in our students.