

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)
 - 5 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 24 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	39	36	75
1	35	20	55
2	40	26	66
3	22	25	47
4	34	14	48
5	19	35	54
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	189	156	345

*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
 - 14 % Black or African American
 - 3 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 80 % 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: 11%

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	16
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	22
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	38
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	342
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2%
6 Total number ELL

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

Haitian Creole, Korean, Kurdish, Nepali, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 31%
 Total number students who qualify: 108

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %
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>4</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>4</u> Developmental Delay | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 15
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.	16
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	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.

Our mission is to prepare our students to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century by providing a safe, nurturing, and academically challenging environment.

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

Grandin Court Elementary School (GCES), Home of the Eagles, is an urban school located in southwest Roanoke city. GCES has been referred to as “The best kept secret in the valley.” With our strong community involvement, parental support, shared leadership, veteran staff, high academic performance, and dedicated students, GCES is a thriving educational environment. The main building was constructed in 1950; additional classrooms, a pavilion, and an outdoor amphitheater have been added. Consolidation of some Roanoke City Public Schools in 2009 resulted in a rapid 33 percent increase in staff members, a loss of regular and special needs preschool programs, and an increase of 140 K-5 students. Due to the additional enrollment, a gym was built in 2011 using an architectural membrane. GCES is a non-Title 1 school within a diverse socio-economic neighborhood community. We serve over 350 students in K-5 with 33.15 percent of students eligible for free and reduced lunch.

GCES’s mission is to prepare our students to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century by providing a safe, nurturing, and academically challenging environment. GCES promotes the development of basic skills, incorporates the use of multi-media technology, and fosters creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking skills. This mission promotes the understanding, acceptance, and respect for others, emphasizes responsibility, promotes a positive self-image, and encourages life-long learning.

Community support and strong parent-teacher relationships are essential elements of our success. Congregations in Action (CIA), a coalition of local churches, supports the many needs of our students. GCES benefits from a core group of volunteers who provide support to our students on a daily basis. Multigenerational families and staff members’ children constitute a portion of our students.

GCES leadership follows a team approach, relying upon the collective efforts and knowledge of the school’s leadership team, the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Board, grade level chairpersons, school committees, and student leaders. Our grade level teams meet weekly with the principal to discuss data, curriculum, and student needs. In addition to our safety patrols and student buddies, in 2009, GCES was the first elementary school in the area to create a National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS) to promote student leadership.

Academic excellence is a tradition at GCES as evidenced by the following awards presented by the Virginia Board of Education: Governor’s Award for Educational Excellence, 2008; The Board of Education Excellence Award, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2017, and 2018; The Board of Education Competence to Excellence Award, 2012; and The Board of Education Distinguished Achievement Award, 2013 and 2016. GCES is currently ranked third in the state on www.schooligger.com based on student data.

GCES students earn a variety of awards each year. Examples include winners in the annual Roanoke Fire Prevention contest, Red Ribbon Week contest, individual and team chess awards, 2018 Roanoke City Public Schools (RCPS) spelling bee runner-up, and placing in the division-wide Engineering Challenge for the past two years. Students are recognized quarterly for attendance, citizenship, and academic achievements. Additional annual awards include Presidential Physical Fitness Awards, Citizen of the Year, and 600 Club for Standards of Learning (SOLs) tests. Students earn field trips as a reward for reaching summer reading and mathematics goals. Additionally, staff members have won awards and received special recognitions. For example, our strings director was named a Yale Distinguished Music Educator in 2017.

GCES staff works to meet the needs of the whole child while also recognizing the need to use standardized tests as a metric of performance. Teachers align their lessons, activities, and assessments to the state and district curriculum but leave room to adapt to student and classroom needs and interests. Our teachers created a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program called Eagle Expectations based on respect of self, others, and property. Our citizenship programs, Pritchard’s Pals and Character Counts, reinforce school expectations.

Funding for school programs has been challenging due to decreases in supplemental funds. Our staff works diligently to find sources to supplement the district allocations. They utilize sources like Donor’s Choose, mini grants, community grants, corporate sponsors, and extracurricular fundraising. Our PTA matches our

district revenue each year for school-wide improvements and supplemental materials.

The success at GCES is a direct result of our outstanding staff and excellent staff retention rate. Classroom teachers have an average of 21 years of teaching experience with an average of 12 years at GCES. This enables the faculty to become experts in teaching the core curriculum and establish growing relationships with our students while maintaining traditions and high expectations. Teachers push students academically and use failure as a learning and teaching opportunity. However, even as a veteran staff, professional development remains a priority.

Our mission statement is the driving force behind GCES. As a result, students work hard for themselves, the teachers, and embrace the RCPS philosophy of “Strong Students, Strong Schools, Strong City.”

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

GCES's reading curriculum is designed to fulfill the Virginia SOLs. The mandated topics of phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing skills are taught at all grade levels. Teachers utilize curriculum guides and instructional calendars provided by the district as well as state curriculum frameworks to plan well-paced instruction.

Our curriculum is cohesive across grade levels and builds on previous years. Teachers collaborate weekly to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the students. All grade levels use the same basal readers and word study program which help provide a unified approach to teach comprehensive reading skills.

Reading instruction is delivered both in whole group and small group settings. In whole group, students are taught grade-level concepts and are provided a forum for discussion in which questioning strategies are implemented for deeper comprehension. Small group instruction provides the opportunity for differentiation using an extensive library of leveled readers. Additional blocks of time for remediation and enrichment, termed "Team Time," are scheduled daily. During Team Time the reading specialist, teachers, instructional assistants, and volunteers provide differentiated instruction to small groups of students. Teachers incorporate phonics programs and word study strategies to master foundational skills. Online reading skills programs, many of which provide data of individual student progress, are accessed by students at all grade levels for practice, remediation, and enrichment. Teacher-made materials such as task cards, games, and interactive smart TV activities, are used in student work stations for skills practice. Cross-curricular topics are addressed through reading selections, and writing is embedded in daily instruction across all disciplines to enrich subject matter. Students pair poetry and art in content areas. Our teachers use differentiated novels and read-alouds to enhance instruction.

1b. Mathematics:

GCES's teachers have developed a mathematics curriculum that is extensive and procedural. The curriculum forms the foundation for a successful lifetime of mathematics and is routinely adjusted to meet the needs of classes and the evolving requirements of the SOLs. Complex concepts are simplified to meet the diverse learning needs of our students. When appropriate, students move from the concrete, to the pictorial, and then to the abstract. For example, when teaching money concepts, students begin by manipulating coins to identify characteristics and value, apply information through a variety of technologies, and culminate with a classroom store where students can purchase goods. Teachers use games and activities to keep students engaged while mastering important skills. Our mathematics classes are often an active time with students rotating through an array of learning stations.

Various types of technology and software programs are used to teach, practice, remediate, and enrich instruction. Data from assessments is used to form mathematics groups, determine the skills needed to be remediated, and identify the skills that have been mastered. These concepts are then integrated into the curriculum through review stations, homework, daily enrichment activities, and remediation during small groups in our Team Time block. Our students experience mastery in mathematics skills with the help of volunteers and tutoring clubs. After-school SOL review provides another opportunity for remediation.

1c. Science:

At GCES, science education incorporates exploration of real world and life skills as well as various opportunities to make learning fun and hands-on. Skills and vocabulary are strengthened progressively. Teachers create units based around experiments using instructional strategies for each SOL strand. Examples include: technology programs, group work, peer tutoring, interactive activities using smart TVs, trade books, interactive notebooks, writing connections, live animals in the classroom, and field trips.

Students participate in a variety of extension activities including modeling moon phases with Oreos, simulating tectonic plate movement through the use of graham crackers and icing, and building marshmallow catapults for a division-wide competition. They also make root beer floats to investigate characteristics of matter and create instruments to demonstrate characteristics of sound.

Students are naturally curious about the world of science; therefore, it serves as an opportunity for cross-curricular connections. Language Arts is tied into science through the use of Reader's Theater, informational writing prompts, interactive notebooks, journaling, and research projects. Mathematics and science are interwoven through data collection, measurement techniques, and variable analysis.

GCES enhances learning by planning field trips and outreach programs across curricula. Natural Bridge, Virginia Safari Park, North Carolina Zoo, and local farms provide opportunities to explore habitats, life cycles, rock formations, and life beyond the city. Carvins Cove Reservoir and Water Treatment Plant, Roanoke Valley Water Authority, and Clean Valley Council enhance environmental awareness. Blue Ridge Institute at Ferrum College, Frontier Culture Museum, and a variety of local museums promote learning through historical and scientific displays and interactive experiences. Local theaters and Hollins University plays expose students to live theater. Students participate in ice skating at Elmwood Park in downtown Roanoke to support physical activity, offer new endeavors, and have fun.

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

Teachers design engaging social studies lessons and activities that align with the essential skills and knowledge of Virginia's SOLs. This allows for students to learn empathy for the past, self-worth in the present, and civic responsibilities moving forward as involved and responsible citizens of Virginia. From kindergarten through fifth grade, students interpret and analyze historic events and contributions. GCES supports the essential skills in our approach to teach social studies, so our students mature and become productive citizens of our neighborhoods, our city, and our commonwealth. From first grade's Bargain Bazaar to fifth grade's Civil Rights Movement writing project, students use critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and compare and contrast relationships of the past and present. Each grade level practices higher-level thinking skills.

Assessments are used to improve student and school performance through creative projects, research projects, formative and online assessments, teacher observations, spiral reviews, and writing prompts based on vocabulary and skills practice. GCES follows division assessment schedules including benchmarks, cold reads, snapshots, and writing prompts. Assessment charts are kept for each SOL strand to be analyzed for remediation purposes. Teachers are cognizant of the importance of building and sharpening students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Classroom teachers use many types of formative assessments to track student progress and drive instruction. Activities, such as online flashcards, scavenger hunts, quizzes, memory games, crosswords, and other online game-based learning platforms, are used to provide data for specific skills. Project-Based Learning (PBL) assessments include PowerPoint presentations, Adobe Spark, differentiated menus, book reports, and science projects.

Teachers specifically select Virginia-based field trips to engage students by visiting places they have studied. Technology-based instruction allows students to research and explore points of history and other ethnic backgrounds beyond our fence. Cross-curricular studies include mathematics skills for economy, writing and vocabulary skills using primary and secondary sources, novel studies, science investigations with map skills and geography, and interpersonal relationships for cause and effect of past and present. The teachers and students at GCES extend social studies lessons into relevant, real-world situations to nurture and produce excellent citizens. Junior Achievement volunteers from the community participate in five lessons of instruction at every grade level to encourage future entrepreneurship. Kindergarten students regularly skype with another class in our school system, culminating with a year-end field trip. This opens their understanding that the world is bigger than their school and community. Fifth graders choose a state to research and create a PowerPoint presentation to share with classmates.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Specialists contribute to the overall success of students in multiple ways and across all grade levels. Classes provide daily opportunities for students to explore their strengths. This enhances the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills through group collaboration, and initiates the opportunity to forge relationships with every student. Kindergarten through fifth students are offered the disciplines of library, music, art, and guidance once a week, and Physical Education (PE) instruction twice a week. Kindergarten and first grade students receive instruction in Spanish twice a week.

Research indicates students who participate in quality music programs increase their language development, reading fluency, ability to process sounds, and writing and mathematics sequencing skills. This is accomplished at GCES through a variety of experiences such as singing, listening, moving, improvising, and playing instruments. Students have opportunities to perform a variety of musical styles at monthly PTA meetings, local sporting events, Noteworthy Music (a charitable music festival), and venues throughout the city. Enrichment classes are offered with small ensembles and chimes. Through a partnership with VH1 Save the Music Foundation, all fourth and fifth grade students have access to string instruments. GCES fosters an appreciation and love of music to last a lifetime.

The art program is designed to give students confidence to create on their own. Cross-curricular activities are implemented in art classes including the creation of salt dough maps of the state of Virginia in fourth grade and Greek columns representing the architecture in third grade. Students participate in a fifth grade memory project by painting ceiling tiles displayed throughout the school. Our art curriculum fosters a love of creativity and a desire to explore different mediums of expression.

PE moves past the prescribed SOLs by expanding and building on format from skill development to full-game play in preparation for middle school. Examples of activities include: body space awareness activities, basketball, soccer, football, gymnastics, jump roping, hockey, scooter hockey, scooter soccer, badminton, tennis, team handball, Frisbee throwing, Ultimate Frisbee, parachute games, and fitness stations. The division offers swim lessons as part of the PE curriculum for all second grade students.

There are many opportunities to make connections with the larger world through the library's mission of seeking and obtaining information. Using children's magazines, students learn about current events. Understanding facts, listening to discussions, and hearing other viewpoints lead to forming opinions on topics. Knowing the needs and interests of our students help provide media instruction in an engaging way. An interesting and diverse library collection fosters a desire to read, leading to academic success. The use of literature increases vocabulary, comprehension, and interest in different cultures and ideas.

Exposure to different people, philosophies, and habitats expands student awareness of the world. Our kindergarten and first grade students attend an introductory Spanish class. They learn vocabulary and culture through singing songs, technology activities, movement skills, and game playing.

Students understand why the instruction of today will benefit them in the future. Problem-Based Learning (PBL) encourages students to create, invent, and experiment, and allows students the freedom to fail. The students learn that failure is temporary and necessary. One example of a tool used in PBL is a maker cart, or Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) cart. Students use the materials provided to create concrete solutions for problem scenarios. Coding instruction enables students to become sequential thinkers, problem solvers, and cooperative learners. Students investigate how to "debug" programs to promote perseverance. Learning is enhanced through the daily use of interactive televisions, tablets, and laptops. This increases educational opportunities, provides individualized instruction, and improves students' comfort levels with technology.

The counseling program at GCES provides direct and indirect services. Students participate in weekly classroom guidance lessons highlighting social and emotional growth, test-taking skills, and career awareness. Individual and group sessions are conducted daily based on referrals made by students, teachers, administrators, and parents. Our counseling specialist coordinates Therapeutic Day Treatment Program services, CIA, and Reading Seeds (a monthly donation of books to students in need). GCES focuses on one character pillar each month including: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and overall citizenship. An activity is conducted to recognize students in each grade level who exemplify the trait of the month.

3. Special Populations:

Our school's special population groups include special education, English Learners (ELs), and a variety of students with disparities in academic performance. GCES also serves a population of students who meet criteria for gifted and talented enrichment instruction. Students who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to target specific needs, receive instruction primarily within the general education classroom with support services in place to benefit the students. For students who require more specialized instruction, particularly in reading and mathematics, pullout services are available and utilize a variety of resources. Access to the general curriculum is supported using research-based practices and programs to target below grade level skills. All students work throughout the day in cooperative, heterogeneous groups with a variety of instructional techniques such as task cards, online resources, guided reading instruction, and manipulatives.

ELs are identified through testing and given the opportunity to attend a school with full-time services. All identified students at GCES declined services in order to remain on site. Due to the inclusive environment at GCES, these students receive differentiated instruction that supports their success.

The reading specialist and instructional assistants work directly with students to remediate skills and work with individuals or small groups to assist in providing accommodations. The groups of students who work with the reading specialist are fluid and change as needs arise. The focus of the reading specialist changes each year depending on the needs of the school. A Response to Intervention (RTI) committee meets twice a month to discuss students that require academic or behavioral monitoring and additional support. Students are given intense interventions, and progress is monitored weekly.

The gifted resource teacher identifies students in our school by analyzing achievement test scores, ability test scores, grades, and input from classroom teachers and parents. Once students are identified, they are given the option to attend a gifted program located at another school. Some families choose to waive the opportunity in order to remain at GCES. These students meet weekly and are provided with challenging and enriching educational opportunities designed to encourage and develop their exceptional abilities. The gifted resource teacher also serves as a resource for classroom teachers.

Our school utilizes a team approach to close the achievement gaps across every grade level. Team Time is staggered throughout the day to provide additional support to all classroom teachers targeting specific skills. This ensures that all students receive supplemental needs-based instruction. Special education teachers, specialists, classroom teachers, instructional assistants, and the reading specialist are all a part of this specialized instruction. Special education teachers attend Professional Development (PD) focused on core curriculum. GCES staff participated in a two-year formative assessment PD with an emphasis on mathematics. Number sense is a priority with continual training to establish student foundational mathematics skills. Small mathematics rotations are an integral part of the daily schedule including technology programs, manipulatives practice, and teacher-directed lessons. These methods have been instrumental in closing achievement gaps in mathematics.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

We take a holistic approach to students and pedagogy. The spirit and culture at GCES are warm and inviting, beginning in the main office with an engaged and caring school secretary and principal, and carries over with the student work displayed in the hallways. Staff members and approximately 20 safety patrols greet students from the bus loop to the classroom door each morning to start the day on a positive note.

GCES engages and motivates students by encouraging positive behaviors through our school-wide programs, Pritchard's Pals, and Eagle Expectations. Pritchard's Pals, an individual student incentive, was created by the staff as a positive behavioral reward system named after our principal. Students must demonstrate responsibility and respect for school rules to become a Pritchard's Pal. Staff members also developed Eagle Expectations as a positive, comprehensive behavior expectation system, which encourages respect for self, others, and the school. This system sets high expectations, builds student confidence, and increases parental involvement in school activities. GCES teachers produced a video demonstrating positive and negative behaviors relating to Eagle Expectations. This video is shown at least twice a year to model appropriate behaviors. When a class is demonstrating expected behaviors, staff members give compliments to the class. Once a class earns 25 compliments, the class is rewarded with a celebration. When additional goals are met, classes participate in various activities such as a bounce house, obstacle course, extra recess, or class choice. Classrooms receive a trophy to display when milestones are met. Eagle Expectations has been instrumental in setting a high standard of behavior. This school-wide effort fosters an environment that sets GCES students apart from other schools and was well worth the two years it took to develop and implement. We conduct assemblies to recognize academic and behavioral achievements.

Our school culture is deeply rooted in the community. Our PTA strongly supports our teachers by providing funds to purchase basic classroom materials, student supplies, tokens of appreciation and words of encouragement, special luncheons, and school-wide assemblies. Our PTA also fundraises across years to pay for large project expenses such as playground equipment. Room parents provide supplies for classroom celebrations. The PTA rewards students for participation in events such as a Fall Festival, Spring Fling, an auction, Box Top Thursdays, Family Dinner Nights, and a walk-a-thon which had over 80 percent student participation.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

GCES works with families to promote student success and school improvement. Teachers start the school year by initiating contact with each family through a positive phone call. Communication with parents is implemented through the student agenda which is to be initialed by the parent daily. Parents are kept aware of behavior, academic progress, and school functions. Grade level newsletters are sent home weekly. Parents are encouraged to access the school's website and Facebook page to get additional information. In addition to the district requirement, conferences are scheduled throughout the year as needed.

Grandin Court is fortunate to have an extremely active and supportive PTA. They engage families through events such as Parents' Night Out, grade level performances, skate days, movie nights, and sponsored family dinner nights at local restaurants. Many of these activities directly support the students by providing funds for instructional materials, technology, fine arts performances, playground equipment, and field trip opportunities.

We utilize numerous community volunteers and outreach programs that support the curriculum such as the Pack-A-Snack Program coordinated by the CIA and community donations of coats, books, hats, gloves, backpacks, food, and school supplies. These are instrumental to the success of GCES students. Local businesses support the kindergartners by allowing them to trick-or-treat to build relationships and help them see community helpers in their environments. The fire department visits our school to teach fire safety skills which also builds community relations. Show-and-tell helps engage students and parents together at

home. TheraPets, Chess, Odyssey of the Mind (OM), Happy Healthy Cooks (a program run by volunteers to teach students about healthy eating habits and food prep), Clean Valley Council Outreach programs, and readers for Black History Month and Read Across America Day are all ways in which our students benefit. GCES is fortunate to have numerous members from the community, including former students, parents, and grandparents, who provide academic support through tutoring, teacher assistance with clerical tasks, and help in our library. More than 100 volunteers consistently donate over 3,000 hours annually to contribute to our students' success.

GCES strives to give back to the community through participation in annual 5Ks, a Veterans Day program, and United Way donations. The NEHS adopts a program each year to support our community and school families. Students make cards for local nursing homes and veterans, and collect items for Thanksgiving baskets for families in need. Many of our students participate in a Christmas parade held in the community.

3. Professional Development:

Education is constantly evolving with the world around us. As a result, PD is an ongoing process at GCES and is crucial to student success. GCES staff members attend district required PD days and volunteer to teach sessions to peers in the district. Some examples of PD topics that have enriched our instruction are: Cathy Collier's writing method, formative assessments, SmartBoard and smart TV activities, Breakout boxes, mathematics manipulative lessons, essential skills and knowledge of SOLs, and Trauma Informed training. Following PD sessions, teachers have the opportunity to present new ideas to the staff at faculty and grade level meetings. Mathematics teachers piloted a formative assessment program using the Professional Learning Communities method. In November 2015, our principal and a fifth grade mathematics teacher presented these results at a Virginia Department of Education meeting.

In addition to district professional development requirements, the principal creates a menu of professional growth expectations specific to GCES. The offerings change yearly and are differentiated for teachers depending on their role. Options include: data notebook collection and analysis, creation of Technology Enhanced Items, Total Participation Techniques in lessons, skyping, use of the outdoor classroom, observation of a peer within the district, book study, and new technology practices. High expectations and growth are just as important for teachers as for students at GCES.

The principal prepares a book study each year based on students' needs and staff members' interests. Our convocation speaker at the opening of school this year was Manny Scott, an original Freedom Writer, who experienced trauma at a very young age. His passionate, dynamic account of his childhood helped enhance the city-wide focus to recognize students who have experienced trauma and how to support them in the classroom. In order to support our Trauma Informed training, our book study revolves around authors who experienced or wrote about childhood trauma. Teachers choose books that help them grow professionally. Ultimately, teachers benefit from the book study when we share as an entire group.

GCES's school-wide behavior system, Eagle Expectations, is a direct reflection of training in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Additionally, professional development is offered at the school level in the form of classroom observations of peers, staff meetings, grade level meetings, and courses taught by professors from Virginia Western Community College employed by Roanoke City Public Schools.

4. School Leadership:

GCES's leadership is unified and participatory. We use a top-down, bottom-up approach, meaning all staff members have an essential role in the success of our students. Weekly staff meetings communicate expectations across all grade levels, ensuring consistency and giving teachers the opportunity to provide input on school-based decisions.

Our principal is actively involved in the planning, implementation, and coordination of instructional practices within each grade level. The principal empowers the school staff by providing opportunities for growth, being an active listener, and creatively utilizing support staff. High expectations for herself and

determination to do what is best for students are key elements of her leadership. She expects no less of herself than she expects of her staff members. Her willingness to go the “extra mile” and her creative use of resources, help teachers and motivate students by providing multi-faceted experiences. Teachers and students are encouraged by regular visits to their rooms. Our principal has an open-door policy for staff and parents. All ideas are considered and input is collected from staff on matters that affect the school. She strives to be fair and consistent with staff and students. She attends weekly grade level meetings allowing for continuity across the grade levels. Grade level chairs are utilized to communicate expectations and relay information. Support staff meetings are held regularly to help ensure awareness of school-wide issues and provide training.

Our Leadership, Safety, Technology/Testing, and Events Committees address incentives for good behavior, safety, and overall well-being within our school. Social events planned by the principal throughout the year extend relationships beyond the school walls. Teachers mentor interns from local colleges to expose them to a positive learning community.

Parents and students also play a leadership role at GCES. Monthly PTA Board meetings are attended by committed parents, teachers, and the principal. The resources they implement provide for the overall success of GCES each year. Leadership activities of students include morning announcements, safety patrols, peer tutors, book buddies, and NEHS volunteerism projects consisting of gardening, bake sales, movie nights, and food drives.

All staff and students at GCES believe in high expectations and working together. Our school motto, “Treat others as you wish to be treated,” makes our school a special place to learn, thrive, and succeed.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The development of strong, positive relationships is at the core of GCES's success. Students are encouraged and motivated by connections formed with staff members. GCES staff works diligently to provide opportunities for a variety of relationship-building experiences to all students.

As Manny Scott stated, it is "just as important to know who you teach, as what you teach." GCES staff knows that it is vital to understand students on a personal level. Situations are created that enable teachers to form relationships with students that reach beyond the classroom. Teachers choose to eat in the classroom with their students daily to have conversations about their lives outside of school. Each year, teachers and staff members partner with students, "eggs," who need extra support and encouragement. The staff at GCES attend students' extra-curricular events to foster meaningful relationships with our school families. We are in the process of becoming a Trauma-Informed School System through district and school-level training to help meet students' academic, emotional, and physical needs. We want to equip students with the tools necessary to overcome trauma.

Students are able to build stronger relationships with staff members in small group settings. We are creative in our approach to managing large class sizes in several ways. Small groups provide individualized emotional support, opportunities for connections, and are consistently visible in all areas of the building.

An additional vital component to building relationships is peer interaction. Students within each grade level connect with one another through shared recess, lunch, and activities. Students in the upper grades are paired with students in the lower grades for mentoring and partner reading. In turn, the lower grades support the upper grades by creating cards and posters of encouragement prior to statewide testing.

Relationship-building starts when students enter our school for the first time, continues from year to year, and extends beyond the elementary years. Former students and families consistently return to GCES to volunteer, visit staff members, and to seek guidance. We create a family atmosphere where all students are encouraged to do their best. Through supportive programs like Eagle Expectations, Pritchard's Pals, and the Character Counts curriculum, we have been able to set school-wide expectations. These strong connections built throughout the years are evident when students not only meet the district and state testing benchmark scores, but consistently earn advanced performance scores. Grandin Court Elementary School is proud to prepare students to meet the challenges and opportunities for the 21st century.