

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. Valerie Fowler

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

Official School Name West Teays Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3676 Teays Valley Road

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

Hurricane City WV State 25526-0000 Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Putnam County

Telephone (304) 757-6711

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Web site/URL http://wtes.putnamschools.com/

E-mail vfowler@k12.wv.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. John Hudson

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail jghudson@k12.wv.us

District Name Putnam County Schools District Tel. (304) 586-0500

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. Robert Cunningham

(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):
- 14 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 5 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 23 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	14	6	20
K	51	24	75
1	44	37	81
2	44	48	92
3	45	39	84
4	46	33	79
5	38	39	77
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	282	226	508

*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
 - 2 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 91 % White
 - 3 % 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: 7%

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	14
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	21
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	35
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	529
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 28%
Total number students who qualify: 143

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %
89 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>12</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>17</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay | <u>18</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>33</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>4</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 13
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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
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 21:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	94%	95%	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.

To develop global leaders one West Teays student at a time.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

In the beautiful mountain state known as “Wild, Wonderful West Virginia,” West Teays Elementary is located in the city of Hurricane, incorporated in 1888. The construction of Interstate 64 in the 1960’s contributed to Hurricane’s tremendous growth, being ideally located between West Virginia’s two largest cities – Huntington, home of Marshall University, and the capital city of Charleston. Hurricane continues to grow and was named by Bloomberg Businessweek “The Best Place to Raise a Family in West Virginia” in 2013.

Constructed in 1980, West Teays is home to 508 students in Pre-K through fifth grade. We currently serve seven English Language Learners (ELL). Ninety students receive special education services and 140 students qualify for free/reduced meals.

In Hurricane, people are friendly and neighbors help neighbors. We are a close-knit community with remarkable parent support and involvement. Both sports and the arts are important here. Our students are heavily involved in travel sports teams as well as cheerleading and dance. Students can join the Appalachian Children’s Chorus and perform in local theater productions, and many aspire to being in Hurricane High School’s award-winning show choir.

Our school vision focuses on embracing each child, nurturing each mind, and preparing each citizen. The traditions we have established give us a sense of belonging to one caring and special family. These include our Open House Night to kick off the school year and a Book Fair/Family Night in March. For Family Fun Night in May, we enjoy food and activities including a disc jockey, climbing wall, inflatables, and even a mechanical bull. Other traditions include grandparents’ lunches, holiday meals with parents, and a special fifth grade reception with a ceremony of recognition before dinner.

The last day of school is Step Up Day. Students excitedly go to next year’s classroom to meet their new teachers. This alleviates anxiety over the summer and provides a smooth transition to the following grade level. Finally, we line the hallways to honor our fifth graders with a clap out as they take a final “victory lap” around the school and this chapter of their lives closes and the next begins.

One cherished tradition is Heritage Day in the fall to celebrate the rich history of our state and pride in its people. Heritage Day activities include making juice with an apple press, an early settler’s tent, exploring household items and everyday tasks, learning how drums were used on the battlefield, and a hay ride.

We are committed to providing students a safe and caring learning environment, stellar instruction, access to cutting-edge technology, and relevant learning opportunities that will prepare them to be college and career ready. Our students need and deserve nothing less if they are to reach their potentials, and we are committed to exceed expectations as we focus on a well-rounded, comprehensive education for each student we are privileged to serve.

Key to our success is an uncompromising demand for excellence and setting high academic standards. While our school’s proficiency scores have soared over the state level and we celebrate our students’ accomplishments, we remain dedicated to providing a guaranteed curriculum mastered by all students without exception.

A second key to our success is that we make learning not only rigorous but fun. Fun is necessary for authentic learning and long-term memory, so we strive to create “aha” moments and an atmosphere of “exuberant discovery.” Fifth graders construct rollercoasters. Parents bring desserts for learning fractions. We have “No Worksheet Wednesdays.” On any given day, you may see cereal box or snowmen book reports, solar systems, volcanoes, or historical figures made from two-liter bottles in our hallways. Kindergarteners love writing spelling words with shaving cream. On Flashlight Fridays, students cozy up with blankets, pillows, and flashlights to enjoy reading. Students learn about habitats and caring for class pets, including a bearded dragon, and they love bonding with them.

A third key strategy significantly enhances the value we place on the whole child and teaching our students caring, compassion, and giving back to the community. During Dr. Seuss week, on “Cat in the Hat” day, students will bring a dollar to wear a hat. The money will in turn buy hats for cancer patients. We also have a pajama day to raise money for St. Jude Children’s Hospital. We have invited a small school to come experience our Book Fair and each student will get a free book. Fifth graders make blankets and donate items when they visit and sing for the Veterans Home. Kindergarteners have adopted grandparents at a nursing home. We sent cards expressing gratitude for our local police officers. Our students learned that people served by food banks receive less than one gallon of milk per person per year, so we raised over \$1300 for The Great American Milk Drive.

Working with the home and community, we will continue on this path of success so that all West Teays students can aspire to having the brightest futures imaginable.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

West Virginia has established College and Career-Readiness Standards for Reading. From the state standards, we have identified the 10 to 12 essential standards that every student without exception must master. Weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) grade level meetings allow teachers to assess student achievement and to determine needed interventions and enrichment.

One strategy is whole group instruction. In reading centers, students alternate activities to build mastery in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language. In addition to our Wonders textbook, we also use BrainPOP, which provides short videos to reinforce various skills.

Frequent formative and summative monitoring is key, including STAR assessments. Teachers also use “enter” slips to show what students know before new instruction and “exit” slips showing what has been mastered after instruction.

Effective interventions are vital for those needing extra help. Our Retired Teacher Cadre provides small group instruction to K-3 students to address reading deficits. They currently serve 105 students, but these groups remain fluid all year. We also offer Critical Skills Tutoring for second and third graders after school. Our students benefit from online resources such as IXL (from “I excel”) and Imagine Learning.

For enrichment, Accelerated Reader (AR) targets second through fifth graders and helps students track reading comprehension. Students achieving grade level goals are rewarded with parties twice a year. Through the Pizza Hut BOOK IT! program, all students are rewarded for reading. Fourth and fifth graders participate in an annual 40 Book Challenge.

In our Reading Buddy program, fifth graders read to first graders to model oral reading, and first graders read to fifth graders to develop fluency and comprehension. Fourth graders are paired with kindergarteners. We have parents who Read Aloud in classrooms. For Hurricane High School’s Homecoming, senior football players and cheerleaders come read to each class.

We hope to inspire all students to enjoy reading as lifelong learners, and by fostering a love of reading, we are helping them achieve across the curriculum.

1b. Mathematics:

From the West Virginia state math standards, we have identified the 10 to 12 essential standards that every student without exception must master. Weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) grade level meetings allow teachers to assess student math achievement and to determine needed interventions and enrichment.

Differentiated instruction takes place through hands-on centers, classroom groups, clubs, and math games such as Kahoot. We use BrainPOP, which provides short videos to reinforce various skills. A powerful complement to math instruction is Number Talks. This program teaches students to solve problems using mental math strategies. All the students get involved in discussion so it improves the ability to explain and critique solutions. It also gives the teacher valuable insight into students’ number sense.

Frequent formative and summative monitoring is key, including STAR assessments. Teachers also use “enter” slips to show what students know before new instruction and “exit” slips showing what has been mastered after instruction.

We have several effective math interventions in place. Our Retired Teacher Cadre provides small group

instruction to K-3 students to address math deficits. They currently serve 41 students, but these groups remain fluid all year. We also offer Critical Skills Tutoring for second and third graders after school. The Just the Facts (JTF) 100 Club meets before school starts for fourth and fifth graders who need extra reinforcement in learning basic math facts.

For enrichment, our students benefit from online resources such as Prodigy, IXL (from “I excel”) and Imagine Learning. First in Math features engaging games to strengthen fact fluency and computational thinking. We identify our top math students in fourth and fifth grades through a mental math assessment and a written test. Those students take advantage of extra tutoring after school two days a week in preparation for the county math field day competition. We are proud of our many county math winners.

1c. Science:

Our teachers have developed long term pacing guides to cover the required state standards for the science curriculum. In weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) grade level meetings, teachers continually assess student achievement and make needed adjustments.

The adopted text is Full Option Science System (FOSS). Online, we use FOSSweb virtual investigations, BrainPOP videos, and interactive games connected to Scholastic News magazines. Students love Mystery Science. After presenting a mystery to hook students, a story unfolds with videos and discussion, concluding with simple hands-on activities. Mystery Doug is a weekly video series based entirely on questions real students ask such as discovering why the ocean is salty.

FOSS emphasizes hands-on investigation and critical thinking to apply knowledge. Second graders examine beetles’ life cycles, while third graders raise crayfish. When learning about temporary magnetism, fourth graders enjoy making paper clips float in the air using magnets.

In StarLab, students learn about astronomy through an inflatable, portable planetarium. The mobile Agriculture Lab teaches students about products coming from West Virginia farms. The West Virginia Soil Tunnel Trailer is a mobile learning unit about soil, water, agricultural specialty crops, and nonpoint source pollution. We have a High Tunnel garden-based program where students grow vegetables which are sold to our school for students to eat on our daily salad bar. Master gardeners have helped students establish a butterfly garden.

Third graders participate in E-Missions, an interactive adventure using scientifically accurate data to solve problems. Each class assembles an emergency response team and then connects via technology to the flight director at mission control. In Project WET, fifth graders engage in interactive activities promoting water stewardship. Fifth graders go to a military base for three days and participate in STARBASE, where they combine engineering and math concepts to engage in projects like designing a container to protect an egg when launched from a zipline.

Through these meaningful and fun real-world strategies for science, we have dramatically increased state science scores.

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

The West Virginia social studies standards promote proficiency in civics, economics, geography, and history. Our teachers develop long term pacing guides to cover this curriculum. In weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) grade level meetings, teachers continually assess student achievement and make needed adjustments.

To supplement the textbook, we use BrainPOP, which provides short videos on various topics. Students read Scholastic News magazines and incorporate online resources. Many teacher-created units make social studies come alive with relevant, real-world experiences.

Third graders study Explorers by gathering information and creating folders to record their discoveries.

They read to find text evidence and make a mini-biography of each. They examine the obstacles and accomplishments of each explorer and use compass skills to track journeys on maps. For economics standards, we invite a local banker to teach students about savings and checking accounts as well as college savings plans. When studying Native Americans, students make dioramas about the clothing and dwellings of tribes.

First graders studying Christmas Around the World create something to represent their assigned country. Kindergarteners and second graders follow Flat Stanley around the globe. Fourth graders learn to create toys from materials available during colonial times. To complement a research project, fifth graders give their parents a Civil War lantern tour.

An important curriculum focus is on West Virginia History. In addition to our Heritage Day, we explore West Virginia through field trips. First graders visit the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine. They get a glimpse of early 20th century coal camp life and tour an old church and school building. Fourth graders visit the West Virginia Capitol Complex and tour the governor's mansion. At the Cultural Center Museum, they have a scavenger hunt.

Although social studies is not tested by the state, we closely scrutinize this curriculum to design the best program possible for globally prepared students. Fourth and fifth grade students participate in the National Geography Bee.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

West Teays Pre-K classroom is buzzing with activity. We use Creative Curriculum which features exploration and discovery. We encourage independence, self-confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Topic studies integrate literacy, math, science, social studies, art, and technology. Our phonics program helps students build an understanding of sounds.

We use manipulatives for STEM-based projects including an engineering kit and building blocks. In our dedicated science area, students clad in lab coats and goggles explore animal x-rays or construct vehicles. Throughout the year, we rotate dramatic play experiences including a post office, a construction worker, and a farmer's market.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At West Teays, the related arts provide a rigorous and challenging curriculum in physical education, music, library, and art. All students in K-5 and the special needs students receive 40 minutes of instruction on a three day rotating basis.

These energetic classrooms are action-packed and student-centered. Collaborating with classroom teachers and enhancing student achievement in all core subjects is as much a priority as covering the West Virginia Content Standards and Objectives for each discipline.

In physical education (PE), students are motivated to adopt healthy behaviors and habits that contribute to the development of personal responsibility, a lifelong commitment to wellness, and the enjoyment of physical activities. The gym is never closed. Our PE teacher alternates classes for extra PE time each morning as a brain boost. Special needs classes utilize the gym during his planning time.

Students in grades 3-5 are active members of Fuel Up to Play 60. They learn about nutrition, building healthy lives, and developing leadership skills. They even put their skills into practice making smoothies at school with yogurt, fruit, and milk. They also served as volunteers for the Salvation Army.

All of our students participate annually in a heart challenge, such as Jump Rope For Heart. We have the 100 Mile Club for K-5, and students are challenged to run 100 miles during the school year.

Students learn archery in PE, and our school has an archery team coached by a school custodian and secretary. Nineteen fourth and fifth grade students compete all over West Virginia. They can also become academic archers, which is based on grades and allows them to qualify for drawings and scholarships.

Our mission in music is for students to creatively and passionately enjoy music, not just now, but for a lifetime. Students regularly engage in singing, movement, playing instruments, reading music, developing knowledge and skills, creating, and listening to music. The fourth grade Christmas program is complete with choreography. It might even include hot chocolate mugs, pom-poms, cooking utensils, or cowboy hats. Fifth graders have the opportunity to be in the All-County Chorus, and they perform at graduation. Students have the opportunity to take violin lessons after school.

The music teacher has developed a curriculum designed specifically to align with core curriculum standards. The fifth grade focus is on coordination with social studies. A music unit on the blues was coordinated with a reading story. Third graders sing the times tables and do a musical on outer space and the planets for extended science learning. Geography and history are incorporated into lessons on a daily basis. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) songs and activities have been implemented.

Music naturally enhances literacy skills including reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language. We sing foreign languages including Spanish, Japanese, Chinese, Hebrew, African languages, and French as we explore cultures around the world.

Recognizing research on how physical activity changes the brain to improve memory and thinking skills in addition to a host of other benefits, the music teacher intentionally fills lessons with movement, folk dances, world dances, games, and choreography. Coordination, thinking ahead, concentration, teamwork, and problem solving are some of the positive by-products of this instruction.

Our library teacher helps students check out books each week, provides 20 minutes of exercise to help meet PE standards, and assists students with computer work. This includes reinforcement of math and reading skills through such programs as Imagine Learning, IXL (from “I excel”), Prodigy, First in Math, and Accelerated Reader. She helps students with power points, research projects, typing essays, taking tests, and using Office 365 for reports. Our annual Book Fair/Family Night is always memorable and provides funds for purchasing more books and other curriculum needs.

Art instruction takes place in the regular classroom and is often integrated into other content areas. We have a school art fair featuring a piece of art from each student. This year, it is expanding into a leadership event.

Fifth grade students have special clubs on Fridays, and community professionals come in to share their knowledge and leadership skills. Students can choose from art, French, literary circles, producing a school newspaper, accelerated “athletes,” and technology. All of these curriculum areas deepen learning in meaningful ways that students will remember and build upon for a lifetime.

3. Special Populations:

With exceptional student populations, our goal is to provide specially designed instruction, supports, and needed accommodations for academic success and future college and career readiness. Approximately 18% of students receive special education services, and each student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is reviewed annually.

After differentiating instruction and exploring all classroom options, teachers refer students who may benefit from specialized services. Our referral officer assembles a Student Assistance Team (SAT) for each referred student. This team is made up of a diagnostician, a psychologist, the principal/representative, the classroom teacher, and parents. For a six-week period, interventions are implemented including our Retired Teacher

Cadre for small group reading and math instruction and our Critical Skills Tutoring program.

When the SAT reconvenes, they decide whether or not testing is indicated. If so, students have IQ and achievement testing. Both the classroom teacher and parents fill out a report concerning each child's strengths and weaknesses. Placement in special services is then determined. Each student's IEP details the percentage of time and services to be received.

Our Resource Classroom serves 37 students in grades 1-5 including other health impaired, specific learning disability (SLD), and mildly mentally impaired (MMI) classifications. These students benefit from a number of strategies to close achievement gaps. They receive instruction in reading, spelling, language, and math through the Cadre, small group intervention, and supplemental materials for extra practice. They also use specialized programs such as Wilson Reading and Mastery Spelling.

For gifted students, the SAT process is the same. Interventions during the six-week period following referral might include enrichment, innovative technology programs, and peer tutoring. Students who qualify after the appropriate testing receive gifted instruction at another elementary school for one half day each week. The gifted teacher has 30 days to write the IEP for each identified student.

West Teays has a Self-Contained Severe Autism Class, a Self-Contained Severe/Profound Class, and a Self-Contained Mentally Impaired/Autism Class. These classes serve a total of 18 students. We embrace the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework providing flexible learning environments that can accommodate individual learning differences. Student IEP plans detail academic goals in reading and math as well as behavior plans and health plans. Life skills and safety training are priorities. These students may also receive occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech, hearing, and vision services. Adaptive state testing for grades 3-5 is done annually with accommodations.

Sensory equipment and activities help these students immensely. For example, a "Stander" helps students strengthen leg muscles for those who are in wheelchairs. Finally, we have Buddy Time where special needs students are paired with third graders who provide social interaction through reading and playing games. This mutually beneficial learning opportunity is highly valued by our students.

West Teays has two speech therapists serving 71 students. Our English Language Learner (ELL) teacher currently serves seven students. ELL students use phonics, sight words, and games. Their levels of achievement and services to be received are determined by the English Language Proficiency Assessment which is given yearly.

We aim to give all exceptional students the tools to meet challenges and build confidence toward a mindset that moves from "impossible" to "I'm possible."

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

At West Teays, we seek to cultivate a vibrant school culture where students and staff feel safe, valued, cared for, and supported. We know that every positive word and action matters, and building strong relationships characterized by trust and respect is imperative. Our students perceive that we truly are one family and we care for each other well.

A warm welcome is extended to all who enter the building each morning by our Greeters Team. Our hallways are simply beautiful, filled with student artwork, academic projects, and leadership-themed displays.

Our morning announcements set the tone for the day, fostering a common purpose. We recite our mission statement together. First in Math players of the day are recognized and a math fact is given to be reinforced all day. Student birthdays are announced and a Spanish word is learned. A special part of the morning routine is “Project Wisdom,” which is designed to build character and social-emotional competencies through topics like honesty, peer pressure, overcoming failure, and gratitude. Finally, we stand and sing our Leader in Me (LIM) 7 Habits Song and then recite the Pledge of Allegiance and the West Virginia Pledge of Allegiance.

We help new students assimilate by introducing them and their favorite things during announcement. We also welcome them with a school shirt. Our Student Lighthouse Team is planning a Buddy Bench for the playground for anyone who feels lonely and needing a friend, so others can come alongside to encourage and play with them.

We motivate students with classroom and school wide positive reward systems. Any adult can award a leadership letter to any class for doing something right such as following hallway quiet zone expectations. Each time “Leadership” is spelled, the class gets to choose a reward as an incentive to keep making positive choices.

Our administrators frequently praise our successes and all staff members encourage each other both personally and professionally. Accomplishments are celebrated in the principal’s weekly newsletters. We have a shout-out board where staff can recognize each other. Our principals encourage teachers to pursue National Board Certification, and we have receptions to honor this achievement. Teachers meet after school for Tuesday Talks, and we share best practices and learn about the great things happening in various classrooms. We have an annual Christmas auction and donate money raised to a person or organization having a financial need.

We learn. We laugh. We struggle. We persevere. We do it together as a family.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At West Teays, we form vital partnerships and work closely with parents and the community. Our parents place a high priority on attendance and the value of quality education as we all strive for excellence together. Parents are actively involved in promoting reading at home, helping with homework, giving guidance for special curriculum projects, and encouraging participation at home in online math and reading practice with IXL and First in Math.

Research shows that positive communication leads to increased academic performance, and we believe this communication should be ongoing with continuous feedback on both ends. Our teachers communicate through daily planners and weekly class newsletters. All grade levels except fourth use ClassDojo. Through this app, teachers can encourage students, instantly share videos/photos of special classroom moments, and send out timely announcements. Fourth grade uses Bloomz, another communication app, in the same way. We also communicate with parents through our school website, progress reports, report

cards, monthly school newsletters, and student-led conferences.

Our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is interwoven into the very fabric of our school's academic success and daily activities. The PTO organizes homeroom parents who plan holiday parties and help with field days. Other committees clean computer labs, assist in seasonal decorating, provide landscaping maintenance, and serve during Heritage Day and Family Fun Night. They provide the staff with snacks and meals during the year, oversee Staff Appreciation activities, and coordinate the yearbook.

Academically, they participate in Read Aloud, lead hands-on science experiments in classrooms, assist students in the High Tunnel, and organize incentives and recognition awards for the Accelerated Reader program. They fund numerous academic programs including StarLab, the Agriculture Lab, E-Missions, and STARBASE.

We have a Leader in Me Parent Lighthouse Team for school improvement projects. Our Local School Improvement Council is comprised of the principal, teachers, service personnel, parents, and community members. Among their goals are to encourage advice from the business community and to foster the use of school facilities and grounds for public purposes.

Within our community, the Lions Club sponsors a flag essay contest for fifth graders. We have master gardeners, a local musician providing violin lessons, and officers educating our students on cyber and fire safety. Local churches provide meals for students on weekends through the Bag Hunger Project and offer the Good News Club after school. The YMCA offers an after-school child care program in addition to our Safe at School program.

Our partnerships with parents and the community are indispensable and they truly empower the momentum for our success.

3. Professional Development:

Research confirms that the most important factor contributing to a student's success in school is the quality of teaching. To guarantee the best learning outcomes for students and to make teachers more effective and satisfied in all aspects of their work, we participate in both county-level professional development and school-based sessions. Professional development is purposely designed to correlate with the three prioritized goals in our yearly Strategic Plan: to increase math scores, to increase reading scores, and to focus on our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

Currently, our professional development concentrates on the establishment of thriving PLCs which shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning. It is an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles. First, we gather evidence of student learning and then develop strategies to build on strengths and address weaknesses. Next, we implement those strategies and ideas. Finally, we analyze the impact of changes made to determine what was and was not effective. And then the process begins again because we realize that students must learn the essential standards to achieve future academic success.

With a collaborative culture, we focus on results rather than intentions. Data and information are used to promote continuous improvement in student achievement and teacher practice. There are four key questions in this process. What is it we expect our students to learn (knowledge)? How will we know when they have learned it (assessments)? How will we respond when they don't learn (interventions)? How will we respond when they already know it (enrichment and acceleration)?

At West Teays, each PLC grade level team meets weekly with our principals. Our goal is to immediately identify learning problems, develop solutions, and promptly apply those solutions to address students' needs. With time allocated to connecting with and learning from our colleagues, together we sort through challenges and boost morale.

Our principals leave no stone unturned to find the best professional development identified as a best
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practice. We receive specialized training for each newly adopted curriculum. Our principal brings in experts, innovative technology, and research-based reading and math methodologies such as Imagine Learning. One expert presented information about Trauma-Informed Classrooms to promote understanding about the impact of trauma and adversity on students. Many times, individual teachers are trained and in turn present to the faculty. Weekly Tuesday Talks allow the faculty time to continually address areas of professional development. Finally, we view many motivational and inspirational short videos so that we never lose sight of the wonder of it all.

4. School Leadership:

Lead. Engage. Inspire. Our school leadership creates an environment where teachers and students can flourish. Our administrators offer consistent, strong, and decisive leadership that builds collaboration and enables teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at their utmost.

Our leadership sets high expectations for academic achievement and communicates this vision effectively to all stakeholders. We pledge to create a 21st century curriculum, accommodate different learning styles, and build a cooperative link between home, school, and community.

Parents have leadership roles on the Lighthouse Team, Local School Improvement Council (LSIC), and in the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) where they chair over 20 committees. Teachers serve on the Lighthouse Team, LSIC, and on curriculum, budget, safety, and textbook adoption committees. Teachers lead our faculty senate, which meets five times annually. They have an important voice in giving input into new hires, controlling monies spent, and making recommendations to the administration.

Our Strategic Plan is devised by collaborating with both administrators and teachers to reach student achievement goals. They attend weekly teacher meetings, check lesson plans, conduct classroom “walk-throughs,” and do more formal classroom observations. We have weekly Tuesday Talks that give us the unique opportunity for the entire faculty to share successful strategies for student achievement. During evaluations, administrators value what things we are proud of accomplishing for that year.

Our principal strongly encourages and challenges staff to take the next steps in professional growth. Four teachers just completed their National Board Certification, and a total of seven have now reached this milestone. Our principal sends us to extra training and pays for special conferences.

Our administrators are highly visible and immersed in the life of the school. Our principal is outside when students arrive and after school during parent pick-up time. Both administrators are with students at lunch and are visible throughout the day in hallways. Our monthly Spotlight Leaders love their reward of having lunch with the principal.

Our administrators have an open door policy and are always accessible for students, staff, and parents. They are approachable, exceptional listeners, solution-minded, and do their best to take care of whatever we need. They know students’ families and home situations. They prioritize making new students and their families feel welcome with a school tour. They build and maintain positive community relationships. Our administrators are visionary leaders and community builders, and they pave the way to a trajectory of achieving excellence.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Leader In Me (LIM) has been a transformational program that empowers students with the leadership and life skills to be effective lifelong leaders. With a whole-child focus, we instill in students that everyone can intentionally lead themselves and work well with others to bring out the best in each person. From Steven Covey's 7 Habits, students learn to be proactive in their choices, to begin with the end in mind, to work first and then play, to think win-win, to listen first and then talk, to synergize because together is better, and that balance is best.

All students have leadership roles in their classrooms. Fourth and fifth graders serve on leadership teams including the News Team, Ushers, Recycling, and Technical Support. Students create personal mission statements and help develop classroom conduct codes. Students also create Wildy Important Goals (WIGs) which are the few vital goals to accomplish in order to be successful. Next, they implement steps to attain these goals. All this is kept in their Leadership Notebooks, which also track academic data, self-reflections, work habits, behavior habits, and accomplishments. Notebooks are shared with parents in student-led conferences twice a year.

Our three Lighthouse Teams are for staff, parents, and students. Our Student Lighthouse Team plans school improvement projects and runs our success assemblies where accomplishments are celebrated and our monthly Spotlight Leaders selected from each class are recognized.

We have special Leadership Events where families and the community are invited to see student leadership in action. All classrooms do at least two service projects including donations to animal shelters and donations to Lily's Place which cares for infants suffering from prenatal drug exposure. We have collected snacks, pillows, and cleaning supplies for the Ronald McDonald House. We have filled Christmas stockings with toiletries for the homeless. Our special needs classes donated coloring books and crayons to the children's unit at a local hospital.

A special leadership project entitled Leading Each Other As Proactive Students (LEAPS) was initiated by third graders synergizing with buddy partners in fifth grade to use the 7 Habits to work on school improvement topics and develop action plans to present to the PTO.

Since implementing LIM, classroom achievement has increased and discipline issues have decreased. Students demonstrate responsibility, accountability, problem solving, adaptability, and effectively articulating goals. Students carry themselves with confidence, and they report that LIM causes them to think before acting. Most of all, they value knowing how to prioritize tasks and achieve goals. We may be one school, but we are 508 leaders strong.