

U.S. Department of Education
2020 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. Joanne Simons M.Ed, CAGS
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name New Franklin Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1 Franklin Drive
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Portsmouth State NH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 03801-3699

County Rockingham County

Telephone (603) 436-0910 Fax (603) 427-2335

Web site/URL https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/school/newfrank E-mail jsimons@sau52.org

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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Steven Zadavec E-mail szadavec@sau52.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Portsmouth School District Tel. (603) 431-5080

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Ms. Kristin Jeffrey
(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.

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

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 2020 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 2014 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: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 3 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 5 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	18	23	41
1	29	21	50
2	17	19	36
3	30	23	53
4	18	14	32
5	26	19	45
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	138	119	257

*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
 - 3 % Asian
 - 2 % Black or African American
 - 10 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75 % White
 - 10 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: ≤1%

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, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	0
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	0
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	0
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	<.01
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<1

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

Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Lao

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
9 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 29 %

Total number students who qualify: 74

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %

47 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>7</u> Autism | <u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>12</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>7</u> Developmental Delay | <u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>5</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: 5

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the 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.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	20
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

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.

The mission of New Franklin is to create a learning environment that results in high-quality instruction ensuring academic, social, and emotional success for all.

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

New Franklin Elementary School is a vibrant learning community of 265 amazing students in kindergarten through 5th grade and 60 passionate, dedicated staff members located in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Portsmouth, a historic seaport was settled in 1623 and has now emerged as a regional economic and cultural hub for the New Hampshire seacoast. Located 56 miles north of Boston, the city serves as a popular tourist destination, hosting a wealth of historical and cultural attractions. New Franklin was built in 1921 and has a long history of providing a strong foundation for our students. We have a close-knit and supportive school community that continually works together to enhance the New Franklin experience for all. New Franklin is the most economically diverse elementary school in Portsmouth with 29 % of our students receiving free or reduced lunch. New Franklin has the distinction of being a nationally recognized Title I School for Exceptional Performance for two or more years, consistently scores above the state average in state testing and was the first school in New Hampshire to be labeled a Model PLC School by All Things PLC.

New Franklin is a special place, where our dedicated school community is committed to the success of all and strives to develop the whole child by meeting their needs socially, academically and emotionally. We create a student-focused learning environment rich in literacy, math, science, and a social-emotional curriculum that proactively develops children's skills for recognizing and managing emotions, empathy, positive relationships and problem-solving. Our goal to provide an effective, enriching, and engaging education for students is met by being purposeful in all we do, by the student-focused decisions we make, the curriculum we implement, and our passion for the profession.

Our staff holds a deep belief that all students can learn at high levels, therefore our focus is on learning. The school structures that support this belief include a culture of collaboration, a sense of collective responsibility, and a focus on data to inform decision-making. Our highly collaborative staff works together through the structure of a professional learning (PLC) community to improve instructional practices, provide daily intervention, design learning trajectories for individual students targeting a minimum of a year's worth of growth, and to assist students in reaching the high expectations we set for all. Building level PLCs and common planning at each grade level afford the time required to address student-specific needs as well as reflection on tier I curriculum and instruction. The results of this collaboration have been common intervention/enrichment time for 1st through 5th grade, where students are grouped, based on data, for targeted intervention/enrichment based on each student's specific needs. New Franklin frequently hosts New England schools on the first steps of their PLC journey.

New Franklin students consistently excel academically and surpass the State of New Hampshire averages on state standardized testing. Data dialogues using both formal and informal data points are held every six weeks to establish groupings and redistribute resources to the classrooms and grade levels with the most need. While data conversations are important to student growth and development, our teachers realize and place a great deal of importance on relationships. We know that developing positive relationships and taking an interest in every child is the fastest way to accelerate growth. New Franklin staff focus on identifying ways to motivate each child and build a positive working relationship to cultivate their individual skills, talents, and imagination.

Teachers spend countless hours refining their professional skills. They attend a wide variety of district-provided professional development offerings as well as teacher-designed and led professional development within the building and district. Teachers not only build personal practice but spend time collaboratively analyzing data and revising curriculum.

Teachers use classroom practices that cultivate a growth mindset, foster student voice and hold students to clear and rigorous learning outcomes. Teachers have studied and implemented the workshop model of instruction, leading to marked improvements in student reading, writing, and math. Students have rich and diverse learning opportunities through art, music, physical education, library and Maker Lab. Over 100 students participate in our after school 21st Century Learning Grant which provides academic support and enrichment five days a week. We have high attendance and academic performance rates in great part due to these systems and structures.

New Franklin holds monthly Pride Assemblies to recognize and celebrate student achievement and accomplishments. We focus on topics and discussions tied to our social-emotional curriculum, Open Circle. Individual students and entire classes are recognized through class trophies, the Wall of Awesomeness and behavioral Gold Tickets.

Our PTO holds monthly events established to engage in family involvement and to support learning. A major focus of our PTO has been to fund all field trips to ensure that every student has access.

New Franklin is more than just a school it is a supportive and collaborative community focused on student success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

New Franklin Elementary school sets high expectations for all students through thoughtful and targeted implementations of the New Hampshire State Standards. The Standards provide a consistent set of rigorous expectations for what all students should learn and be able to do. New Franklin has revised literacy and math curriculum maps to align with the New Hampshire State Standards, designed grade-level units of study in science aligned to the Next Generation Standards and created grade-level curricular units tied to the New Hampshire Moose on the Loose content and skills standards created by the New Hampshire Historical Association.

To support both teachers and students in their knowledge and understanding of the standards, New Franklin has a primary and intermediate reading specialist and building-wide math specialist. These positions support teachers' growth through professional development, administer and analyze formal and informal assessments, revisit and revise curriculum along with classroom teachers and provide targeted support to students.

To ensure consistency across the grade level, teachers use a highly collaborative team approach. During common planning and PLC time, they meet as grade-level teams to plan instruction, review data, share strategies and best practices to ensure that all students' needs are met. Teachers implement differentiated instruction and/or provide targeted research-based interventions when classroom instruction is not meeting the student's needs. Building reading specialists, special educators and classroom teachers meet every 6 weeks to monitor student growth and determine the need for additional instructional supports to ensure student progress in the area of literacy. If this level of support does not produce results, then a Student Strategies and Intervention Team meeting is scheduled in order to glean professional opinions, guidance, and support from a variety of colleagues to better support student success and/or have students advance to the next tier of intervention services.

1b. Reading/English language arts

For well over a decade, New Franklin Elementary School has fully implemented a balanced approach to literacy instruction tied to the New Hampshire State Standards. The foundation of our curriculum is the Reading/Writing workshop model. Within that structure, we ensure that all students receive 120 minutes of instruction a day with 90 minutes focused on reading and 30 minutes on writing. In the primary grades, teachers utilize the Lucy Calkins' Units of Study in Reading with targeted word study during daily Foundations lessons. At the intermediate grades, students are introduced to explicit instruction of reading strategies in small group book clubs and word study through Words Their Way.

During Readers' Workshop, whole group instruction begins with a daily focus lesson followed by individual teacher conferences or small group instruction. Foundational skills such as reading fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and literary elements are taught using a variety of instructional strategies. Instruction is adjusted based on the response to student needs. Good instruction supported practice and continual assessment are essential within our reading workshop framework. Teachers plan instruction to develop readers who love to read; read often for multiple purposes and think critically about what they read. "Just right" texts that offer challenges and opportunities for problem-solving are chosen to help students expand their strategies with the goal of reading independently. The workshop format gives students tools for exploring and comprehending different genres, authors, and texts. Students learn to make connections with prior knowledge and previously read texts and ask questions to clarify comprehension. We put a strong value on daily independent reading build stamina and create lifelong readers.

Students are assessed up to three times a year using the Developmental Reading Assessment along with weekly Running Records at the primary level and analysis of conferencing logs across all grade levels. All

kindergarteners and students reading below benchmark in first grade are given the district's Dyslexia Screening Tool targeting phonemic awareness to identify those students who require early intervention and support.

New Franklin has implemented Lucy Calkins' Units of Study in Writing across the grade levels. Writing workshop begins with a focus-lesson followed by time to write for an authentic purpose. Students conference with peers and/or the teacher and then revise and edit their written piece. Students share their finished pieces with an audience. Grade level expectations include informational/explanatory, opinion and narrative writing. Student writing is assessed using a rubric aligned to the Unit of Study. Teachers also do biannual writing prompts which are scored and analyzed across grade levels providing feedback for instructional revisions and student support. Additionally, students write in all content areas allowing them opportunities to build meaning, to learn and retain content and to revisit their understanding of what it means to be a writer.

Through PLCs and collaborative planning during common planning time, we make a conscious effort to continuously review student data and differentiate our literacy instruction. As a result, New Franklin has been able to maintain consistently high state test scores. In 2019, 86% of New Franklin's third through fifth grade were proficient in English Language Arts as compared to the state average of 55%

1c. Mathematics

In alignment with the New Hampshire State Standards in Mathematics, the New Franklin mathematics curriculum is rigorous, cohesive and focused. The Everyday Mathematics Program aligned to the CCSS is the foundation of the instructional program. Mathematics Program allows students to develop their understanding using concrete models and problem solving. Teachers use a variety of instructional approaches including direct and small group instruction to blend foundational skill development with problem-solving applications. The emphasis is on building conceptual understanding rather than focusing on an answer, or rote memorization. Instruction is focused on student thinking and understanding of mathematics. Teachers have worked diligently to strengthen our instruction in math by using common assessments and discussing data and teaching practices during weekly PLC meetings. Students participate in frequent teacher-designed formative assessments, end of unit summative assessments and quarterly math-fact fluency assessments. This information is used to refine instruction and provide targeted interventions and extensions of students learning.

Technology is integrated throughout the instructional day to support individualization and differentiation. In math students practice math fact fluency using Reflex Math along with Prodigy and Kahn Academy to individualize instruction in mathematical practice.

Led by the building math specialist, this year staff has collectively worked on developing math practices in our students. Teachers are working on infusing practices such as reasoning abstractly. By developing the practices and habits of mathematicians, students can not only solve what's in front of them but apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems and challenges.

The building math specialist works closely with teachers in unpacking the mathematical practices and provides professional development supporting teachers' knowledge of mathematical practices and understanding. This position allows for additional intervention and enrichment groups across the grade levels.

New Franklin has scored well above the state average in both mathematics and literacy. Most recently, in 2019, 86% of our third through fifth graders scored proficient and above on the state assessment compared to 51% of students statewide.

1d. Science

Following the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) has aligned to the way New Franklin delivers instruction across the content areas. Science instruction across all grade-levels is facilitated through a

student-led inquiry process. Through guided discovery, teachers introduce lessons with a question and facilitate student led scientific investigation through questioning, researching, experimentation, and explanation.

Our science curriculum seeks to develop skills across the various fields of science, using a project-based, scientific inquiry format. Students are instructed in a variety of sciences including physical, life, earth, space, technology, environmental, and natural sciences. Topics of study include but are not limited to: plants, animals, weather systems, erosion, the human body, the water cycle, electricity, magnets, energy, levers and pulleys, the solar system, variables, mixtures and solutions, rocket science, and robotics. Throughout our curriculum, scientific skills such as inferring, predicting, forming hypotheses, identifying and controlling variables, collecting and interpreting data, and experimentation are introduced and reinforced. In addition to classroom instruction, all students are able to create and investigate during Maker Lab and get their hands dirty in our student gardens and outdoor classroom.

The work in science is spearheaded by New Franklin's STEAM CLUB (not a committee because "clubs are more fun") with representation from each grade level, unified arts and led by our math specialist. These teacher leaders, meet monthly to design professional development tied to the NGSS, conduct experiments to be used during instruction and plan the highly anticipated and well attended Family STEAM Evening.

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

New Franklin students demonstrate their learning in history, geography, social/cultural, economic and political considerations in the world through written work, oral expression and collaborative projects. Focus varies in different grades and includes the study of different cultures, customs, communities, state government, New Hampshire history and our past and present role in our country.

In the primary grades, our students focus on their roles as community members within their classroom, school and beyond. With an emphasis on service, students across the grade levels see their impact on others through numerous fundraisers and community projects tied to the NHSPCA, local homeless shelters, nursing homes and the Pease Greeters who welcome and support servicemen and women landing at the former Pease Airforce Base.

In third grade the Portsmouth Historical Society collaborates with New Franklin classroom teachers to share the wealth of historical information about our community. New Franklin is within walking distance of our historic downtown allowing for walking tours or the community.

In fourth and fifth grades, students engage in the New Hampshire Historical Society's Moose on the Loose Curriculum laying the groundwork for exploring the heritage of America along with the state of New Hampshire. Students learn about New Hampshire state history, the role of state government, and its role in national politics tied to the New Hampshire presidential primary. In fifth grade, students become immersed in New England's role during the American Revolution.

Although the emphasis is placed on the four disciplines of social studies (history, civics, geography, and economics), the curriculum also integrates other subject areas as students participate in historical fiction and biographical book studies, research projects on such topics as New Hampshire state history and the American Revolution along with a long-standing New Franklin tradition of a historical figure living history museum in third graders.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our non-core curriculum areas such as music, art, physical education and social- emotional education provide meaningful activities that develop students academically, physically, and emotionally. Our

programs focus on educating the whole child and ensuring that students have the tools, skills, and experiences they need to be confident and successful both in and out of school. New Franklin provides daily 40 minutes unified arts instruction by highly qualified educators.

The library at New Franklin is an inviting central hub of the school. Classes have regularly scheduled times throughout the week to visit the library where they are led through a multi-leveled lesson connected to classroom topics. Students have access to many digital resources along with rich literature including a balance between fiction, non-fiction, poetry and resource materials. The integration of Maker Lab has been infused into the library recently encouraging students to question, explore and experiment. It is truly a time of curiosity and exploration across the grade levels. There are a wide variety of books and resources. It is open and available to students throughout the day, and Library Appreciation, Reading for Personal Growth, and the Inquiry Process/Research Skills are taught during the students' weekly library class. Students have access to a number of digital sources through both our district and city library resources. Library and Information Literacy Standards are based on the belief that students and staff are effective, ethical users of ideas, resources, and information. Surprising to many is that we dismantled our computer lab in recent years. This has allowed for us to fully integrate our use of technology so it is not viewed as a stand alone special but rather a daily resource that we use across content areas. We strive to instill the expectations of digital citizenship and guide students as they learn their path through the digital age.

Art lessons emphasize the process of experimentation and discovery through mistakes so that a growth mindset is woven into the curricular goals. Students work with a variety of mediums as they learn about artists and techniques. Student work fills the hallways, classrooms and foyer of New Franklin creating an inviting and engaging environment. The Annual SPLASH Art Show is an opportunity for students to showcase their work at the local public library. A culmination of instruction students received throughout the year gives reason to celebrate. Students gain a strong sense of pride at seeing their art presented to the public.

Our music teacher exudes a high level of energy teaching students about music history, rhythm, instruments, and musicianship. Lessons are delivered in a multi-sensory model through auditory skills, visual supports, bodily kinesthetic learning, and dance. Musicians spend their time in singing, playing instruments, moving, creating original music and learning to communicate through written music notation. They have access to a variety of tools including such things as ukuleles, recorders, xylophones, and handheld percussion instruments. In addition to their general music classes, grade four and five students can participate in band, chorus and recorder ensemble. The vast majority of grade four students choose to participate in at least one of our performing ensembles. Our kindergarten through third grades perform a winter concert and spring musical. Music fills our hallways throughout the year.

Our physical education lessons are strategically designed to be adaptive for all levels of physical skill. Students are taught the routines of the class including a warmup, brain games and full energy core lesson. Throughout each lesson, students are completely active, focused, and on task.

In addition to the P.E. classes, students receive a minimum of two 20 minute recesses during the day. During the day, teachers are encouraged to stop for brain breaks allowing for stretching time or participating in a Go Noodle exercise video.

New Franklin Students also have the opportunity to participate in our afterschool 21st Century Learning Program MC3 (Making Classroom, Community Connections) Over 100 students participate in afterschool enrichment clubs such as cooking, coding and yoga along with receiving homework help in a safe and secure environment 5 days a week.

All students participate in twice-weekly Open Circle lessons as part of our social-emotional curriculum focused on building community and problem-solving. The school counselors are an integral part of the school and work closely with students, teachers, parents, and administrators to meet building needs. The school counselor provides individual and group counseling services. Group topics include social skills, changing families and zones of regulation. Classroom guidance topics focus on academic, career and personal-social development. Counselors coordinate services with outside agencies and facilitate the

development of positive student self-concept and the development of positive relationships with others. This year we welcomed our newest (and most popular staff member), Utah, an assistive therapy dog to support staff and students.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

The cornerstone of our approach to supporting students is to meet students where they are and provide targeted, explicit instruction focused on where we want them to be at the end of the school year. For our students performing below grade level in literacy, New Franklin uses data to guide instruction and identify gaps in learning. Students are assessed using the Developmental Reading Assessment measuring decoding, fluency and comprehension at the beginning of the year, mid-year if reading below grade level benchmark and at the end of the year to monitor growth. Reading specialists and classroom teachers use this data to match students to “just right text” and to create groupings provided by teachers, reading specialists and literacy tutors. Students kindergarten through grade 5 are given end of unit word study assessments, students in kindergarten through grade 2 are given monthly sight word assessments and students in kindergarten and first grade are given a Dyslexia Screener targeted phonemic awareness three times a year. Reading specialists meet with grade level teams monthly and individual grade level teachers weekly to discuss data points, student progress, make personnel shifts and plan instruction. Every six weeks the principal, reading specialists, special education team, speech pathologist and grade level teachers meet to look at data and supports across the grade level.

In the area of math, we start with data as well to determine supports and student need. At the end of the school year, the building math specialist analyzes end of the year math assessments to determine instructional supports for the beginning of the coming school year. Mathematics is a major focus of PLC groups each year. Teams identify essential math skills, create SMART goals, develop formative assessments and provide differentiated 30-minute intervention groups that meet daily. Groups are small, targeted and fluid meaning that if a student is able to show growth and/or mastery of a topic they are shifted to another intervention group that meets their individual learning needs.

The supports described above are for every New Franklin student to meet individual academic goals. For those students requiring more intensive services, specialists and special educators provide research-based interventions and supports. In the area of literacy, New Franklin has four Wilson Level 1 certified instructors working with individuals and small groups. Students receive small group reteaching of Foundations and Words Their Way. In math, students are provided complimentary instruction to the core curriculum through Do the Math. Students are constantly assessed, and instruction is ever changing to meet the needs of the students. Instructional groups are always fluid with students moving in and out as goals and targets are met.

3b. Students performing above grade level

When planning for instruction for our students above grade level, the structures and conversations are similar to those for students below grade level. New Franklin utilizes student data to identify what students need to make a minimum of a year’s worth of growth. As educators, we aren’t satisfied knowing simply that a student is above grade level. Our conversations focus on what do they need to grow as learners and how are we providing the instructional supports to get them to think more deeply, thoughtfully and challenge them to grow as learners.

Our math and reading specialists meet weekly with individual grade level teachers and monthly with teams to talk supports and small group instruction. While we may find a student is decoding or comprehending above grade level based on our assessments, our questions focus on the level of comprehension and the breadth of reading choice. Our goal is to push our readers to explore genres, topics and authors. In math, we provide extension groups in the intermediate grades focused on problem-solving and building upon mathematical reasoning. Students are challenged to go beyond finding the answer but to explain their thinking.

Technology is an essential tool in differentiating instruction to support our students including such platforms at Learning A-Z, Reflex Math, Prodigy, Spelling City, Google Classroom and Kahn Academy. Technology is utilized to not only connect, supplement, as well as scaffold learning but to also offer students autonomy, to engage and personalize instruction for more accountable learning and collaboration.

New Franklin is the first elementary school in New Hampshire to have a Project Lit Community chapter. Over twenty students participate in this enrichment club which aims to get students excited about reading by highlighting diverse, high-interest, culturally relevant books. Our chapter advisor is the Beat Poet Laureate of Maine and the Portsmouth, NH Poet Laureate providing an enriching experience for all participants.

3c. Special education

New Franklin Elementary School has a long-standing commitment to an inclusive model for all special education students. Our special education staff, related service providers and classroom teachers are focused on providing supports for the full continuum of needs of our students. We are committed as a staff to provide an exceptional educational experience for all students by providing academic, behavioral and related services needed to show student growth. Based upon student needs, identified students receive small group or individual instruction by a certified teacher using research-based interventions. The instruction is differentiated base on each student's needs. We try to keep this instruction in the regular classroom, but at times it will be delivered in a quieter, less distracting environment if it is in the best interest of the student. The students' progress is monitored carefully and interventions are adjusted as needed.

Communication and collaboration are key to the success of our identified students. Members of the special education staff sit on grade level PLC teams to analyze data, discuss instructional practice and plan upcoming intervention blocks. Case managers and related service providers sit in on weekly literacy meetings with reading specialists and classroom teachers to talk about differentiating classroom instruction based on the individual needs of students. As we work with a growing number of identified students (and unidentified) who have experienced trauma, one of our guidance counselors has become more focused upon supporting the needs of this population. Many of our students have behavior and social goals tied to her services and she works closely with classroom teachers supporting these students in classrooms and during times of transition. During the 2019-2020 school year, New Franklin welcomed an assistive therapy dog. While Utah is available to support all students and staff, a significant majority of his time is to assist our behavioral counselor in her work with identified students.

While New Franklin performs well above the state average in literacy and math, we are not currently satisfied with the proficiency of our special education population. We are addressing this by adjusting staffing, increasing our knowledge of research-based interventions and setting additional times for grade level teams to look at data. We are monitoring students closely and adjusting instruction as needed.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

Creating a positive learning environment is important for supporting the growth of all students. New Franklin classroom teachers establish a sense of community in their classrooms and provide structures such as predictable routines, procedures, and expectations. These routines and structures have been essential in supporting our small ELL population. New Franklin's Readers/Writers' Workshop model provides us with the opportunity to support our ELL population by immersing young students in literacy. Working with our ESL instructor, teachers modify lessons to support language acquisition, immerse students in the language of literacy with daily read alouds and match students to "just right" text to teach structure, pattern and decoding skills. Our ELL students conference throughout the week with classroom teachers, literacy tutors and our ESL teacher to discuss and monitor their reading and writing. As with all New Franklin students, we meet our ELL students where they are and scaffold instruction focused on language acquisition and academic growth. Students also work with the ESL instructor during individual sessions to support specific needs, preview upcoming content and reteach lessons. Fifth grade "Big Buddies" work with kindergarten and first grade ELL students two to three times a week reading books, playing vocabulary rich games and eat together to model conversation and increase vocabulary. Staff is also provided the opportunity to

participate in district-provided professional development including workshops and graduate-level courses tied to supporting our ELL population.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

New Franklin has created an environment through positive behavioral interventions and supports to engage, motivate and celebrate our students. Through the ongoing development of a multi-tiered system of behavioral support (MTSSB) students understand behavioral expectations throughout the school. Staff also focus on positive behavior and give out “GOLD” tickets when they catch students: Giving respect, Obeying the safety rules, Leading by example and Demonstrating responsibility. Teachers and the counselor build social-emotional learning through daily morning meetings and twice-weekly instruction in the Open Circle SEL curriculum focused on building community and problem-solving.

Each month we gather as a school community for our New Franklin Pride Assemblies. These meetings are designed to bring the school community together to learn from one another and celebrate specific success and creativity. Each gathering is focused around a theme tied to our Open Circle curriculum or a Growth Mindset stance. Students are an integral part of the assembly oftentimes performing a skit tied to the theme or introducing an upcoming event or fundraiser. These meetings are a focal point of our school. They remind students that we are one community working together to do our best always. Our younger students enjoy learning from their older peers and our older students gain a sense of responsibility for leading the younger children

The New Franklin Student Council consists of elected officers and class representatives in fourth and fifth grade who are the voices of the student body. They bring up concerns and gather feedback from all students. The Student Council plans activities that encourage giving back to the community. The annual Socktober collection for our local homeless shelter, the Thanksgiving food drive and winter collection for the SPCA are the most popular. Student Council representatives lead our New Franklin community each morning during daily morning announcements sharing positive messages, student celebrations and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Teachers are supported and empowered through a variety of means. Grade level teachers meet weekly in their professional learning communities to collaborate on curriculum, design formative assessment and analyze student work. Teachers are also involved in making decisions for the school. They serve on the Steering Committee, the MTSSB Team, Climate Committee among others making decisions that impact students and staff daily. These venues provide teachers with the opportunity to express their voice. Teachers are empowered to take active leadership roles in the school and coordinate various school-wide and professional development activities.

School counselors support students across all grade levels providing emotional and social support through groups and individual work with students. Celebrations for citizenship and academics take place in classrooms throughout the school on an ongoing basis. Students are celebrated on our Wall of Awesomeness after being nominated by a staff member for being safe, respectful and responsible. Students have their pictures taken and then make a phone call home with the principal to celebrate their contribution to the New Franklin community. There is a strong focus on community at New Franklin. Our fourth and fifth graders are “Reading Buddies” for younger students and our fifth graders have lunch with the kindergarteners to serve as role models and big buddies.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Fostering strong family and community ties are critical to New Franklin’s success. Staff, students, families, and the community at large work together as a team to ensure the academic, social, and emotional success of each student. Consistent communication, an active PTO, partnerships with community partners and resources are hallmarks of our school. At New Franklin, parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to be involved in their child’s learning.

Communication with our families is essential in building strong partnerships to support our students. At the

classroom level staff routinely uses email, Twitter, SeeSaw and the Homeroom app to inform and share snapshots of students engaged in learning. Parents frequently fill the hallways on the way to attend an authors' celebration, read to students, run a classroom center, chaperone a field trip or attend a student performance.

The principal sends a weekly newsletter to all families keeping them informed of current happenings and upcoming events. The principal's monthly Coffee and Conversation provides an informal setting for parents to stay updated and ask questions about school initiatives or concerns. Throughout the school year, our PTO's overarching goal is to strengthen the home and school connection. From monthly meetings to a myriad of social events, the PTO encourages broad participation for all members. The Pasta Dinner, Spring Lawn Fete, Book Fairs, staff luncheons and Ice Cream Social are New Franklin traditions. The PTO offers enrichment programs such as Artist-in-Residence, science activities, staff grants and funds field trips so all children can attend without financial worry. In addition to monthly meetings, the PTO reaches out to families through their weekly newsletter and Facebook page.

New Franklin has engaged with a number of community partners to the benefit of our students and staff. Through the generous donation of materials, time and money, businesses such as Walmart, Burlington Stores, Hannafords and JoAnn's Fabric have become important partners. They help fill our behavioral prize bucket, donate items for 5th grade fundraisers, fund field trips and donate supplies.

Families in need of behavioral or mental health support are referred to the city's Community Wrap Around Team where they receive a coordinated plan for resources to support their individual family needs. Families who may need financial support are referred to the PTO's Caring Committee who rally around our families during times of crisis to provide meals, gift cards and support as needed.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Our Professional Development Plan focuses on enhancing instructional strategies, strengthening leadership, and promoting professional and personal growth. Professional Development is fostered in a variety of ways. Teachers set academic, personal and professional goals annually which drives a great deal of building-level professional development. In the past three years, New Franklin's staff goals and outcomes have led to the development of the district's Dyslexia Screener, summer enrichment programming, improved family communication tools and the introduction of an assistive therapy dog to students and staff.

New Franklin staff has the opportunity for professional development during early release time, in-service days, and team requested days for focused topics. During weekly PLC meetings, teams are able to gather, review student data, monitor their progress and make adjustments to their strategies to meet long and short-term goals. The building principal believes in utilizing "in-house" professional development and expertise. Teachers are experts in their craft and encouraged to share ideas and successes with colleagues. New Franklin teachers serve on a variety of building leadership teams. Staff members are engaged in our Steering, Climate and Multi-Tiered Behavioral Support Committees and STEAM Club. These committees help lead the building-level professional development targeted such topics as mathematical fluency, problem-solving and practice, social-emotional learning, curriculum mapping and STEAM activities across the grade levels.

Working and learning right alongside our teachers are our tremendous paraprofessionals and literacy tutors. Many are members of grade-level PLC teams and building committees and their voices and perspective are essential to our work with students. They participate in building-wide professional development throughout the school year as well as attend role-specific training around such topics as student behaviors and de-escalation.

At the district level, there are opportunities for staff training and collaboration across schools. Over the past two years, the staff has received training in security and emergency response protocols, math practices, technology integration, executive functioning and understanding anxiety in students. Portsmouth Schools offer a wide variety of in-house courses and elective training opportunities for staff. Our district catalog features many offerings, including Understanding Student-Centered Learning, Brain-Based Learning,

Growth Mindset, Competency-Based Education, and Working with English Language Learners.

All staff at New Franklin are actively engaged in professional development. They are truly lifelong learners

4. School Leadership:

New Franklin's principal believes in collaborative leadership consisting of the students, parents, teachers, and the principal. The collective voices of staff, families and students are vital to New Franklin's success. Maintaining a shared vision is key and keeping stakeholders focused on the vision is an essential objective of building leadership. The principal is oftentimes on the go visiting classrooms, reading in the hallway with students or having students in her office for lunch. Teachers, staff and students know that the principal is available and accessible. In a building with one administrator, it is necessary to create a climate where we work as a team to ensure all students are receiving what they need when they need it.

Another key element in the principal's philosophy is leading with appreciation. In any successful school, staff works hard day in and out to support students academically, behaviorally and emotionally. As a building leader, it is essential to acknowledge the heavy lifting done on a daily basis whether it's done with a note, treat trolley or covering a classroom or recess duty to provide the gift of time. These gestures are meant as a way to celebrate staff and create an environment where staff feels valued.

The principal understands that communication is key to establishing and maintaining strong relationships with families. She sends out weekly newsletters, maintains social media and holds monthly parent coffees to distribute and gather information from families. Making positive phone calls home celebrating students has shifted the traditional worry about a call from the principal to eagerly looking forward to the call. This commitment to working in partnership and establishing clear communication begins prior to a student's first day of school with the principal making home visits to incoming kindergarten families to welcome them to the New Franklin family.

The principal is an active and engaged leader who works diligently to create an atmosphere of shared leadership responsibility. She believes that every staff member is a leader within their given role. The principal works daily to ensure teachers are given the time, resources, and training to best improve and implement best practices to support student growth.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one strategy that has driven our work and guided our practice at New Franklin is our commitment to the Dufour model for Professional Learning Communities. Teachers at New Franklin have a clear understanding of what students should know and be able to do across the content areas. All students have access to the curriculum and teachers work closely together in designing and redefining instruction to provide students with opportunities to show their understanding. For 10 years PLC teams have collaboratively developed common assessments to target student learning for both formative and summative purposes. Teams meet weekly to analyze student data, reflect upon instruction and design lessons for our daily, first through fifth-grade intervention block. As a staff, we have committed to “it’s about the learning not the teaching”. Our focus is on every student showing growth and understanding of learning objectives.

Commonly designed formative assessments are used by PLC teams during their intervention cycles to target the specific learning needs of students. Pre-assessments allow for students to be identified for reteaching or enrichment. Intervention cycle “pulse checks” allow for the fluid movement of students from one group to the next once mastery of a concept is shown. Finally, commonly designed post-assessments show growth, mastery and the possible need for additional support and instruction.

In addition, teachers come together throughout the year to work on curriculum pacing, lesson design and instruction during dedicated professional development days.

We use a no-excuse approach to learning. If a student is struggling, it is the responsibility of the team to find a way to help that child succeed. The same can be said for students who excel. Under the PLC model, all students are learning at their instructional level and all teachers are monitoring progress to ensure forward momentum at all times.

The PLC model has helped us focus our teaching through a collaborative model. It helps us focus on the unique ways our students learn not as an excuse to water down the task, but as a way to help them move forward. When small instructional gaps form, teachers find ways to close those gaps immediately. We turn the mirror on our own teaching long before we consider a student’s learning history. As a group, we feel the full responsibility of helping our students succeed, and we all play an important, yet unique role in making that happen.