

U.S. Department of Education
2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Lillian M. Steen School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 134 W. Main Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Bogota State NJ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 07603-1246

County Bergen County

Telephone (201) 342-6446 Fax _____

Web site/URL https://www.bogotaboe.com/ E-mail dcollins@bogotaboe.com

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. Damian Kennedy E-mail dkennedy@bogotaboe.com
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bogota Tel. (201) 441-4800

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 Mrs. Lisa Kohles
(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 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):
- 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 4 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	10	5	15
K	15	24	39
1	11	26	37
2	21	8	29
3	27	16	43
4	30	23	53
5	26	28	54
6	18	20	38
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	158	150	308

*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
 - 11 % Asian
 - 8 % Black or African American
 - 63 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 12 % White
 - 6 % 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: 13%

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	26
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	11
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	37
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	291
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.13
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

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

Albanian, Arabic, Bangba, Bengali, Chinese, Hebrew, Korean, Macedonian, Punjabi, Polish, Spanish, Urdu

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7 %
23 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 43 %

Total number students who qualify: 131

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %

45 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>0</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>10</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>23</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: 4

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.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	6
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	10
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 15:1

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%	96%	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.

Our mission emphasizes the importance of contributing to our community by recognizing the value of learning with a higher purpose and engaging in out-of-the-box thinking.

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

Lillian M. Steen Elementary School is located in Bogota, a small town of approximately 8,400, located in Bergen County, New Jersey (NJ), approximately five miles from the George Washington Bridge and New York City (NYC). Over the past 20 years, the demographics of the community have slowly shifted from a primarily Irish/Italian majority to a diverse mix of residents. According to the 2018 Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), it is estimated that approximately 42.1% of residents in Bogota are now of Hispanic origin. Many of these new residents are first- or second- generation immigrants or newly transplanted from NYC looking for a better education and living standards. In the same ACS 2018 survey, the percentage of foreign born in the town was approximately 32.7%. Because of the size and population of the town, Bogota is a close-knit community, and there is a sense of familiarity between families.

One of the key strategies that we have used to help students reach their full academic potential is targeted instruction. When looking at the data from the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) as well as summative and formative assessments, teachers are able to tailor their instruction in order to meet the individual needs of each student. This differentiated instruction allows students to work to their potential as well as create challenging, yet attainable, academic goals for each student.

All students participate in our character education program from Sanford Harmony. This program allows students to interact with one another on a deeper level and build connections they might not have been able to typically forge with one another. The program focuses on having all students feel included; and, at some points, stepping out of their comfort zone to challenge themselves to speak with peers they might not have had a sustained interaction with in the past.

The school also provides students opportunities to participate in various clubs as they become older. We provide our 5th and 6th grade students with the chance to participate in the garden club. In this club, the students learn about the essential elements of maintaining and planting a garden. They clean the garden beds after winter and plant new flowers and vegetables in the spring. Our 6th grade students are able to apply to become safety patrol members. As safety patrol members, they are responsible for helping the younger students during lunch and recess time. We also offer the chance for 5th and 6th grade students to become a part of our student council. The elected students sit on our food service committee that allows them to have an open dialogue with our food service provider regarding how they can improve lunch. They also run our Day of Service in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. During the day of service, students make thank you cards for police and firefighters, conduct a food drive for a local food pantry, and raise money to donate to the library, along with a plethora of other activities. It is through these various programs, that we look to educate the whole student and prepare them for a future where they can find success.

One of the most special times of year at Lillian M. Steen School is our Week of the Arts, which takes place the first week in June. The goal of this week is to immerse students in various artistic activities and experiences that they would otherwise not be exposed to. The Week of the Arts has many layers to it. There are various assemblies that take place throughout the week that span a wide range of cultures and performing arts. We have assemblies that showcase different types of dancing, such as Step, the Chinese Dragon Dance, and Bollywood. We have also featured plays, such as the Velveteen Rabbit, a play about the immigration experience, and Peter and the Wolf, just to name a few. The students from Bogota High School come to Steen School each year to kick off the Week of the Arts. This allows former students to perform at their elementary school and provides the elementary students with an opportunity to see how they can be involved in the arts in the future. In addition to the myriad of assemblies, there are various workshops that take place throughout the week for each grade. The teachers, along with the principal, teach pottery, dance, introduction to violin, yoga, culinary arts, and line dancing. This week allows students to explore areas of the arts and learn about different cultures through immersive experiences. It truly is a special week that both the students and faculty look forward to each year.

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

At Lillian M. Steen School, we strive to provide differentiated instruction that allows each student to work towards and achieve their potential. The curriculum that we implement challenges students to see beyond the surface level and spark creativity and imagination through hands-on experiences and interactive lessons. Students learn best when they can take ownership and feel a sense of pride in their accomplishments.

We look to instill a sense of responsibility in each student that enables them to captain their own ship on their educational journey. Teaching students to take responsibility for their own education helps them to become successful members of the community well beyond their years in elementary school. This accountability teaches students to ask for help when needed, but also to persevere when the work is challenging.

Literacy is paramount in our curriculum. We believe that it is the foundation for success in all subject areas and helps to create opportunities in the future. Therefore, reading and writing opportunities are infused across all subject areas for students to experience reading and writing through a variety of genres.

By meeting students where they are and educating the whole child, we are able to help create lifelong learners. More importantly we hope to plant a love of learning and curiosity that flourishes for many years to come.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Reading and writing are the foundation on which all other academic success is predicated. When teaching language arts it is important to use a multi-faceted approach to meet our diverse learning community. By providing various strategies from preschool through sixth grade, we encourage our students to take ownership of their reading.

In kindergarten we use Wilson Foundations Phonics to help students learn strategies to decode, recognize various letter sounds, and tap out words. By explicitly teaching these strategies, students are given the tools they need to become readers. The Foundations program extends from kindergarten through second grade. This allows students to familiarize themselves with strategies that are consistent from year to year. All of these classrooms display various anchor charts that are similar year to year. Additionally, we are continually striving to provide our students with the latest innovative programs and teaching tools. This year we have piloted a new reading program, Teachers College Phonics, in our first grade classrooms. By trying new programs, we are able to learn other strategies to help students succeed academically.

We currently implement Reader's and Writer's Workshop in our classes. Through Reader's Workshop, students learn how to become active readers while independently reading books on their level. After the mini lessons, teachers take the time to conference with individual students in order to meet all individualized needs. Teachers will keep notes regarding each conference so that the next time they meet with a student they can check back in with the previous goals that were been set. Through Reader's Workshop we hope to instill a love of reading within each student and create active, critical readers. Writer's Workshop exposes students to a variety of writing purposes. Students share their own life experiences through narrative writing pieces. When learning about persuasive writing, students are able to pick what sparks their interest and write an impassioned argument that will hopefully persuade the reader

To assess our students' ELA progress there are a variety of planned assessments we administer throughout the school year. Every single student's Teachers College Reading Level is established and tracked throughout the school year. We administer a reading running record to determine a student's reading level. This is done in September, January, and in May. This helps teachers and students determine if students are

progressing in their reading fluency and comprehension. Students who are struggling and reading below grade level are identified and are then additionally assessed using DIBELs 8th edition benchmarks. These Tier 2 and Tier 3 students are scored in various reading areas depending on the grade level. This could include letter recognition, phoneme segmentation, nonsense word decoding, or oral reading fluency to name a few tasks. Students data and progress is recorded every 10-14 days using the DIBELs assessment. Student writing and orthography is used through the Curriculum Based Assessments provided through Writers Workshop where students produce grade level writing and is then scored using the Teachers College writing rubric. All of this data is recorded and shared in a Standards Based Report Card that is sent home every trimester. Our school has a team that analyzes this ELA data to look for future curricular or instructional changes. For example, we have closely started to look at our assessment data and broken it into categories: phonological awareness, oral fluency, decoding fluency, letter/sound recognition, comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, written organization, etc. Looking at this data helps the data team determine if there are gaps between teachers, grades, or even schoolwide.

1c. Mathematics

Our school's math curriculum closely aligns with the rigorous New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Our staff has closely scrutinized the state's math standards with our current math program, enVisionmath 2.0, and developed a district scope and sequence that ensures that students are learning the standards in a logical and sequenced manner. Teachers use traditional text and online components to provide opportunities for student learning in and out of the classroom. All math instruction includes multiple options for teachers to use during any given lesson, such as an introductory visual learning video, partnered practice, independent practice, enrichment opportunities, problem-solving activities, and targeted intervention work.

Math instruction will usually begin with whole group instruction to introduce the new concept. Teachers will then break out into various activities and groups depending on the students' knowledge and mastery of the objective. Some students may work independently immediately. Other students will work in small groups or with partners, while some will work in a group guided by the teacher. This inherent differentiation requires teachers to constantly formatively assess where a student is and guide task and purpose. It allows all the students to grow at a suitable pace.

A year's worth of math instruction is divided into major topics and throughout the year students are summatively assessed with benchmarks that cover required standards. Our school closely monitors gaps in student learning through data collection and analysis. A data committee, in conjunction with the district data coordinator, analyzes specific student weaknesses and trends and creates targeted products and recommendations to the staff on how to improve classroom instruction. Our school utilizes NJSLA (state-testing) data, classroom benchmarks (enVisionmath), student reading levels (for word-problems), and teacher input to conduct our data analysis.

1d. Science

2018-2019 was the first year Steen School utilized a new Science program that pushed instruction to be more hands-on and rigorous. Elevate Science's methodology challenges students to be more like scientists when they investigate natural phenomena. Investigations include engaging students in real-world topics and utilizing problem-based learning called "Quests," such as "How can we preserve and protect the resources we need?" In addition to the knowledge base and vocabulary required to investigate such a problem, students are provided opportunities to solve problems using engineering principles. Students engage in Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Science and Engineering Principles by designing, building, and applying core knowledge to new situations. Real and virtual labs help students test their hypotheses to generate conclusions and theories. For example, in a fifth grade lab investigating Earth's oceans, students investigated and tested how to obtain freshwater from saltwater. Our science instruction is a hybrid of online resources and traditional print books. In addition to the labs and Quests, students are assessed using topic/unit tests to demonstrate core science knowledge.

Elevate Science has generally two types of assessments that we use. The first is that after each topic there is an online assessment to gather student knowledge on the topic and have students synthesize data to produce

a hypothetical conclusion. This Curriculum Based Assessment helps teachers monitor the skills and knowledge that students have learned during the unit topic. Students are then asked to apply many of the skills and new acquired knowledge in a hands-on lab that requires making observations, gathering data, and generating conclusions. Since Elevate offers many labs, our teachers come together collaboratively to determine which labs are most effective and engaging to help improve the overall efficacy of lab instruction.

In addition to the curricular assessments, we have just begun to analyze the new NJSLA-Science state standardized test. We have recently received the data and will approach this data much like we do with our math and ELA data. Our data team will break down the test into content areas and skills and then try to identify general gaps in curriculum and instruction as well as individualized student gaps so teachers can differentiate instruction for individual students and small group instruction.

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

For Social Studies we use a program called “Social Studies Weekly.” Each week students are presented with a newspaper that discusses various topics in history and civics. There are worksheets that correspond with each newspaper. Social Studies Weekly is only a small portion of the Social Studies curriculum. Teachers are continually supplementing instruction within the classroom to expand on important topics. For example, in third grade all students participate in our Wax Museum. Each student chooses a famous person from history and writes a biography. The culminating experience is when students dress up as this famous person and parents and schoolmates are invited to meet them. Each student is set up as if they are a display in a museum, and when approached he or she provides various facts about their persona. In fourth grade students perform a play about the history of New Jersey at the end-of-the-year. They create all of their own sets and practice for weeks. The fourth grade students then have the opportunity to perform the play for other grade levels in the school. Fifth grade students read a biography of a famous person and then dress a poster board cut out the way that person would have dressed, while adding different facts about their life to the opposite side. In sixth grade students are able to use their artistic ability and create models of famous landmarks that they learned about during the year. These are just a few of the many projects and experiences that the students participate in during the course of the school year with regards to Social Studies. It is important to take history out of the page and bring it to life for the students.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

Bogota School District just began full-day, public preschool for the first time, starting in January 2019. The district opened up four inclusive classrooms, one of which is located in Lillian M. Steen school. This one classroom has 15 total preschool students, three of whom are students with disabilities. The 3-4 year old preschool program uses Creative Curriculum, a research-based, play-based curriculum that provides students with developmentally appropriate activities, objectives, and routines.

Creative Curriculum’s 38 objectives and classroom activities closely align with NJ DoE’s preschool standards. These same standards aid and prepare students for the K-3 performance standards. In our preschool classrooms, you will not see students seated at tables for extended periods of time with worksheets. Instead, children progress through various organized activities, such as large group morning meeting, small group investigation and learning, and free choice centers. The centers may include: Blocks, Dramatic Play, Toys and Games, Art, Library, Discovery, Sand and Water, Music and Movement, Cooking, and Technology. Teachers use the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment tool to clinically observe and measure student growth in all of the 38 objectives in the curriculum.

Our preschool is supported through Preschool Expansion Aid state funding and is well-supported and rigorously monitored. The preschool teachers in all the classrooms throughout the district meet at least once a month to conduct professional learning. In addition to the Steen principal, the Director of Research and Planning, and the Supervisor of Pupil Services are heavily involved in the observation, evaluation, and SGO (Student Growth Objectives) process. A preschool master teacher also provides weekly coaching and

support in the preschool classroom to ensure fidelity and ECERs (Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale) compliance.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

1. Visual/Performing: Students receive music instruction once a week based on the New Jersey Student Learning Visual/Performing Arts standards. All instruction is age-appropriate and skills-based so that children aren't just being exposed to music, but are also developing the foundational musical skills that can be transferred into musical instruments, vocals, and appreciation. Our elementary music curriculum includes: ukulele instruction, recorder instruction, solfege instruction, rhythm instruction, and musical notation. Currently, we are also running an after school choir program for elementary students who will then participate in the high school concerts. A select group of choir members will also be participating to sing at our local senior center come spring. For those who are interested in instrumentals, students are afforded the opportunity for lessons and morning practices with a certified music teacher.

Our art teacher strives to create engaging, authentic, and interesting art projects throughout the year. Students work with different mediums and skills, and are exposed to various styles and artists throughout elementary school. Some examples would be: sculptures, weavings, etchings, drawing, painting, acetate, paper collages, clay, impressionism, Egyptian Hieroglyph, portraits, realistic, and abstract art.

2. PE/Health/Nutrition: Our students receive a minimum of 150 minutes of physical education a week. Our PE teacher is careful to ensure that students actively participate and that all NJ Comprehensive Physical Education standards are being met. The complementary aspects of PE, fitness skills and team activities, are balanced. Our PE teacher assesses student fitness once per marking period with the Presidential Physical Fitness Test. This helps the teacher assess the overall physical fitness level of each student. In every PE class, students first begin with a warm up and stretch. From K-3 grades, the main focus is cardiovascular health. From 4-6 grades, the main focus is fitness and muscular endurance. From there students engage in sport and team based activities. Outside of the school hours, our students can sign-up for after-school basketball, since our school district has a strong basketball program. This year we are also bringing our students to the local bowling alley.

Students also receive one period of health and nutrition instruction from the classroom teacher per week. Our school utilizes The Great Body Shop as a program to help instruct students on the human body. In addition, there are several state mandated topics that must be covered, such as: accident/fire prevention, bullying prevention, which includes conflict resolution strategies, cancer awareness, domestic and child abuse awareness, gang violence prevention, Lyme disease, sexual assault prevention, and suicide prevention.

3. World Language (Spanish): Our students in grades K-6 receive one period of Spanish instruction per week. However, Spanish instruction actually begins in our preschool classroom. In all areas of the classroom, items are labeled in both English and Spanish. Students are taught songs and phrases in both languages. Given that the majority of our community is Hispanic, it is our goal to recognize and highlight the importance of their language. In grades K-6, students begin with the basics and then graduate to more formal aspects of Spanish instruction. We closely follow the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language's (ACTFL) performance guidelines and model our units so that all instruction utilizes the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational.

4. Technology/Library/Media: Our media specialist does a fantastic job of incorporating the more traditional skills and knowledge typified in a library special with 21st century computer skills and design knowledge. Students conduct research, choose independent reading material, investigate digital citizenship, improve their word processing skills, engineer Makey Makeys and Lego robotics, and generally become comfortable with utilizing the computer in creative ways or as a tool to achieve their end goal. A new initiative has also been the instruction of discerning disinformation and teaching the skills on how to be a knowledgeable digital consumer of information.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Our school offers a comprehensive approach to educating students who are performing below grade level. Our Response to Intervention team works closely with classroom teachers in order to help bridge the learning gap for these students. Students receive assistance in small group settings where lessons are tailored to meet the individual needs of each student. The teachers in these small groups use the Wilson Reading program to boost an understanding of phonics for our emerging readers. Other groups use the Leveled Literacy Intervention program, which is a comprehensive intervention reading program. This program continually monitors students' progress by having teachers take down running records. Students work on developing reading skills that will assist them across content areas. Teachers also work to address issues that impact comprehension, as reading comprehension is a key component to educational success.

We offer support for students who are identified as needing assistance with Math. There are academic interventionists who push into the general education classes in order to assist these students. The teachers will typically take a small group and work on specific math skills. The skills that the teachers work on range from basic math facts to intricate mathematical concepts, depending on the needs of the students. Student progress is monitored through formative assessments, such as completing the daily solve and shares, as well as summative assessments when students complete a chapter test or a benchmark exam. Our goal by offering these extra supports is to help bring students up to grade level. We have seen success through these programs that have helped to close the achievement gap.

3b. Students performing above grade level

At Lillian M. Steen school we pride ourselves on offering differentiated instruction across our grade levels. This differentiated instruction not only benefits students who are facing academic challenges, but also students who are performing above grade level. During Language Arts, students are able to read text that is above grade level and work on various skills. In Math, teachers have students working in different groups or independently, which allows students, who excel in math, to learn at an accelerated and personalized pace.

We also offer a Gifted and Talented program for students who qualify. In order to qualify for this program students have to have teacher recommendations and pass the Otis-Lennon School Ability Test (OLASAT). Once students qualify, their grades and NJSLA scores are closely monitored in order to remain in the program. During Gifted and Talented classes students work on STEAM activities. Each year one group builds cameras and then takes pictures around the school. Other groups build catapults, create insulation to keep water bottles cool, and construct a civilization on Mars. These are just a few of the activities that engage our students in out of the box thinking and challenge them to look beyond the obvious. Students look forward to these classes and the different ideas that they are able to explore together as a team.

3c. Special education

At Lillian M. Steen we offer a variety of programs and services in order to help our students with special education needs succeed. Each student who has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is placed in a program that would allow them to access the curriculum in the least restrictive environment. Resource room programs are available in Math and English. In this setting the students are taught in a small group in order to better tailor lessons to fit their individual learning styles. Additionally, we offer inclusion opportunities in our general education with the support of a paraprofessional. Some of our students have one to one aides that provide assistance with intensive academic or behavioral needs. Depending on the setting, the teacher will modify the curriculum according to each student's IEP. Support services available to students include individual and group counseling, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and consultation with a behaviorist. It is through these various programs and supports that students are able to make measurable growth throughout their years at Lillian M. Steen School.

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

Our English Language Learners program services students from kindergarten through sixth grade. These students, depending on their need, will have ELL classes anywhere from one to three times a day. The students are grouped based on their age, as well as their knowledge of the English language. These groups consist of anywhere from two to eight students. The focus of these lessons is on acquiring English language skills through various content areas, such as Social Studies and Science. The other goal of this class is to engage the students in conversational English in order to gain the necessary skills to succeed in school and also within the community. The ELL teacher is in constant communication with families to maintain a strong home school connection, which helps not only the student, but also the entire family. For the 2019-2020 school year, the teacher piloted a program called the Essential Skills Program, which looked to increase English language fluency. All students participate in the Access for ELLs testing during the year. This test allows the school to monitor their progress from year to year. This test is used to determine students who are ready to exit the English Language Learner program. Our goal is create an environment where students feel supported and are able to flourish into fluent English Language speakers.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

It is important to not just educate students academically, but to also provide them with tools that support their social and emotional growth. In the 2019-2020 school year we implemented a new curriculum called Sanford Harmony to help students build a more positive school environment. Each day the students engage with one another in a Buddy Up activity. This is a quick five to ten minute activity that allows students to engage with other students who they might not typically interact with. The Buddy Up activities range from creating a secret handshake to discussing who you would most like to have dinner with. The schedules for all students at Lillian M. Steen School have a built-in Wellness period where teachers are able to teach more in-depth lessons that help students build healthy relationships. Sanford Harmony has various themes that each teacher will discuss throughout the year. The themes are: Diversity and Inclusion, Empathy and Critical Thinking, Communication, Problem Solving and Peer Relationships.

We have a full time social worker employed at the school who runs multiple social skills groups with students throughout the year. These social skills groups help students who might struggle with communication to build positive peer relationships. Our social worker also provides one on one counseling for individual students based on their specific needs. The district employs an outside agency, Care Plus, which also provides counseling for specific students at Lillian M. Steen. Through these different programs we hope to address the mental health needs of our students in order to support them to succeed.

Every month we choose a different student of the month from each homeroom. We highlight different character traits, such as generosity, leadership, kindness etc. for the month. The students, who are chosen as the recipients, receive a letter home from the principal, a pizza party with the principal, a certificate they can take home, and they have their photo displayed on a bulletin board. At the end of the year each teacher will choose a student of the year during our awards ceremony.

Each year the whole school participates in the Week of Respect. This week is dedicated to creating a positive school environment. The students participate in a poster contest celebrating kindness. The teachers conduct various activities throughout the week and we have a culminating assembly that focuses on anti-bullying and positive peer interactions.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Lillian M. Steen School we provide a myriad of events and ways that allow our families and community to engage with the school. One of our greatest assets is the strong support that we receive from our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). This group of families work diligently throughout the year to fundraise in order to provide the school with assemblies as well as helping to offset the cost of field trips for our students. The assemblies that they provide to the school help to enrich the lives of students. We will typically use these funds to conduct a science assembly, a character building assembly, and history assemblies. These programs would not be possible without the support of our PTO. The president of our PTO also sits on the School Safety Committee which meets throughout the year to discuss various issues and up to date practices to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

We also hold night time events that allow parents to engage with their children around different educational themes. Science Night, which is held in January, is one of the biggest nights where we see parent involvement. During Science Night, there are a variety of experiments set-up around our gym, and parents and children can conduct these experiments. Upon arrival each student receives a pair of goggles and a packet that explains the science behind each of the experiments. We also hold a Literacy Night where parents can come and learn strategies to help their children become active readers at home. Parents leave that night with games and other ways to engage with their child around reading.

Each year we hold parent/teacher conferences in November. Times are available throughout the day and night in order to make sure that every parent has an opportunity to speak with the teachers. Although

conferences are officially held once a year, teachers and parents will continue to meet throughout the year as needed. Many of our teachers use Class Dojo as a means of communicating with parents on a daily basis. Each trimester we send home progress reports as well as report cards to inform parents of their child's grade. Parents are also encouraged to create accounts on our Realtime student database system, which allows them to access their child's grade.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

In order for students to feel supported, it is important that teachers feel the same way. One of our goals at Lillian M. Steen School is to provide teachers all the tools they need in order to create the best classroom environment possible. Each year the school year begins with a welcome back breakfast for the entire district. This allows teachers to connect with one another and engage in meaningful conversations. The superintendent discusses the accomplishments of the previous year as well as the goals for the upcoming school year. This allows all faculty members to unite around a common theme. The teachers will then break out into different groups and engage in professional development that is specific to their content area. For the 2018-2019 school year Lillian M. Steen School began to use a new Science curriculum and the teachers received a full day of PD around this program. In the 2019-2020 school year teachers received professional development around the Sanford Harmony program. Each year thousands of dollars are set aside in order to allow teachers the opportunity to engage in professional development workshops. During the 2019-2020 school year teachers have gone to workshops around various curricular areas. Each time a teacher attends a workshop they are asked to provide information to the whole staff, so that everyone can share in their newly acquired knowledge.

Professional development is only one tool that helps teachers feel valued. It is important that the administration recognizes the accomplishments and hard work of the teachers. Each week the principal sends out an email highlighting great teaching moments that have been observed or thank yous to staff members who have gone above and beyond during the week. It is important that teachers know their hard work and effort do not go unnoticed. The principal at Lillian M. Steen School also employs an open door policy with teachers. Teachers feel comfortable coming into the principal's office at any point during the day to discuss challenges or successes they have encountered. This open door policy allows for constant communication between the faculty and administration that helps to create a productive learning environment. Lillian M. Steen participates in the Teacher of the Year program each year where a specific teacher is highlighted for their contribution to the school community.

4. School Leadership:

At Lillian M. Steen School there is one principal, which is a multi-faceted role. The principal oversees the day to day operations of the school and sets specific long term goals for the school. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure compliance with all observations and state testing. The leadership philosophy of the principal seeks to maintain open lines of communication with faculty and staff as well as the families and students in the school. The principal attends all Parent Teacher Organization meetings, and Student Council meetings because both are equally important. It is through trust and understanding that begins with communication with the community that the school can ensure student success.

The district employs a Director of Research, Planning, Evaluation, and Testing. One of the many roles of this administrator is to look at the data we receive from New Jersey Student Learning Assessments and pinpoint areas of improvement that can be made. This administrator will look at individual scores in order to ascertain areas of growth. This information drives curriculum development as a whole for the district. During the 2019-2020 school year this administrator supervised an overhaul to the Response to Intervention program that we offer our students. This new model has helped our struggling readers to attain various levels of academic success that had previously been unreachable.

The Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services oversees services for students with disabilities. This administrator supervises the Child Study Team, which is an integral part of the school community and lends support to students, teachers, and families. Through biweekly meetings with the Child Study Team, as well as meeting with the Special Education Parental Advocacy Group during the year, this administrator helps to

ensure that the appropriate programs and services are provided to special education students.

The Superintendent of Schools plays a key role in creating and implementing programs that are focused on student success throughout the district. This administrator puts students first in all areas of education. By employing this mindset the teachers, families, and other administrators follow this example, and as a result student success, both academically as well as socially and emotionally remains our top priority. As an administrative team it is imperative to communicate to create the important and lasting relationships with teachers and families that ultimately have a positive effect on student achievement.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Four years ago at Lillian M. Steen School an Assessment Committee was formed. This committee was specifically designed to look at the most effective way to deliver the curriculum to our students. This committee looked at state assessments (PARCC/NJSLA) data and identified broad trends where our students were struggling within our school. For example we found that as a school we performed poorly on fractions during the PARCC/NJSLA. After the committee identified this as one of the areas of concern, the principal met with each grade level during a common planning time to discuss how we could better teach fractions. It was important to meet with each specific grade level because different grade levels presented different solutions to the issues. The younger grade levels, that do not explicitly teach fractions, came up with creative ways to introduce fractions during various math lessons. Other grade levels decided to change their scope and sequence of topics and units in order to address this topic earlier and be able to review it later in the year. Fractions were only one of the areas that we scrutinized. We also found that we needed to improve students' grammar and structure of writing, inferential reasoning, and geometry and measurement. For each topic, we examined our current practices and discussed how to make improvements to that specific content area.

In addition to looking at the school as a whole, we also looked at specific students to see where we could target and differentiate instruction on an individualized level. We looked at various reports published by the state and examined where each student could show room for improvement. Once we compiled a list of students, we looked at the units that each needed to improve upon. A list of students was given to each teacher. Therefore, when the teachers taught those identified topics, they knew which specific students required extra attention, differentiated instruction, and/or modifications and accommodations to be successful. By looking at the curriculum on both a macro- and micro- levels, we were able to boost not only our test scores, but more importantly our students' understanding of the curriculum and topics. We have continued this committee from year to year in a systematic way to maintain the high expectations that we as a school have set for ourselves.