

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 132 Providence Avenue SW  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City New Philadelphia State OH Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 44663-9566

County Tuscarawas County

Telephone (330) 364-0725 Fax (330) 364-0730

Web site/URL http://www.npschools.org E-mail brandd@npschools.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.

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. David Brand E-mail brandd@npschools.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name New Philadelphia City Tel. (330) 364-0600

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mr. Denver Gallentine  
(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**

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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

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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):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	22	23	45
1	34	33	67
2	38	33	71
3	38	33	71
4	40	39	79
5	40	36	76
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
<b>Total Students</b>	212	197	409

\*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
  - 0.7 % Asian
  - 0 % Black or African American
  - 3.2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 93.4 % White
  - 2.7 % 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: 2%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	1
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	403
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Spanish

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 23 %

Total number students who qualify: 95

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %

48 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>2</u> Autism                  | <u>9</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>9</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: 13

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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	21
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	9
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 19:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	96%	95%
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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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 school mission statement calls for all students to be provided the opportunity to achieve their highest potential. Students are to become educated, self-sufficient, and responsible citizens. Our school is committed to providing every student a diverse, quality education within a safe and secure environment through a dedicated, innovative, and highly qualified staff in partnership with parents and the community at large.

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**

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South Elementary serves as an incredible example of setting high standards for teachers and students and following through to ensure the highest level of learning for everyone. South Elementary was opened in 1975 as a premier cutting edge, open concept school, with a focus on flexible teaching and learning opportunities. Our school is nestled in the rolling hills of Appalachia and is tucked in a beautiful neighborhood in the southern end of our town.

South Elementary is unique in that it is the school of exceptionalities in our district. The diverse population includes four classrooms for gifted and talented students, as well as, three high needs special education units. The vast exceptionalities are explored and celebrated through various learning opportunities and collaboration between, gifted, typical and special education students. Inclusion and follow through are two major areas in which our school excels. Teachers collaborate and include every child in the building every day. South elementary has a large number of open enrolled students, as parents from the community desire for their children to be a part of the South Elementary family.

The staff at South is held to high standards and holds each student to the same levels of high character and discipline. In 2018 the school was chosen as a Hall of Fame School by the Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators. The award recognized that the school went above and beyond for students. There are 23 full-time teachers, five are intervention specialists, and 4 are gifted intervention specialists. 93% of the teachers at the school are rated accomplished and 77% of the teaching staff have a Masters Degree. We also have 15 paraprofessional staff that supports inclusive practices for students. It is through the collaboration of teachers, aides, parents and members of the community that South has shown ongoing academic and social emotional gains throughout the years.

District goals are established focusing on standards that are set forth by the state of Ohio. Pacing guides and the model curriculum are used with fidelity in all grade levels to ensure consistency in teaching the standards. Monthly Building Leadership Team meetings are held with the Principal in which teachers explore and understand high quality lesson planning, which is shared out with other staff members. The district has also partnered with an outside professional to implement successful Professional Learning Communities. A common building goal was created to improve writing scores. The success of our building can be attributed to the quality of instruction, the standards based teaching and the continued support of the staff at South Elementary. Teachers meet biweekly to review student data, discuss intervention and enrichment strategies and plan for appropriate, yet rigorous instruction. Student based approaches are utilized in the classroom with the daily goal being building lifelong learners who are successful beyond the walls of our elementary school.

The development of the whole child is of the utmost importance at South Elementary School. The implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, as well as a Buddy Bench, Social Skills groups led by our district social worker, classroom meetings, big and little buddy partners, and classroom lessons delivered by local community mental health social workers all support the needs of each and every child's social and emotional health.

South Elementary has a unique building wide reward system. Consistent expectations are set from the start of school and students exhibit self-discipline as they are held accountable throughout the school day in all environments of the building. Rewards include assemblies visits such as high school athletes, trips to the local movie theater, BMX trick bike demonstrations and chinese acrobats. Students are praised for their efforts in attending the positive behavior assemblies which encourages both the child's confidence and self worth. Students who do not achieve admittance into the good behavior assemblies are placed in groups where Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies are practiced. These events and innovation in our school climate make our school a fun and exciting place to learn.

Parent and community involvement are a key factor in the success of the students at South Elementary School. The Parent Teacher Association works very closely with the staff in order to provide resources needed for each teacher to perform their best in their classrooms. The parent community is very active,

volunteering in the classrooms throughout the building every day. It is through these connections that students can truly thrive daily.

South Elementary is a welcoming elementary school that focuses on the individual needs of every student who walks through its doors. The sense of belonging, high expectations and follow through as well as collaboration with students, parents and staff are what make our elementary an exceptional school.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

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

Each grade-level team at the building level meets to set smart goals that align with established district goals. Action steps to propel learning and reach goals are set so that each student has a personalized learning experience. Teacher teams focus on high-quality lesson planning for all curricular areas. Standards are explicitly targeted in lessons with focus on mastery expectations. The staff analyzes Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data and tracks reading improvement monitoring plans (at-risk students), placing students in small groups for intervention or enrichment. Students in both primary and intermediate grade levels are progress monitored toward grade-level standards across content areas using Google Sheets. Standard monitoring sheets are utilized in order to chart and track each student's progress using color-coded systems.

South Elementary has a common intervention/enrichment time embedded in their school day. This time allows teachers, intervention specialists and related arts teachers to collaborate and create skill-based grouping per student need. Teacher based teams meet weekly to monitor and redesign groups as well as utilize a station rotation approach to address learning at the zone of proximal development. Teachers continually review MAP test scores and use an instructional focus model to teach, reinforce, or enhance skills. Formative and summative assessments are also used to track progress. Teachers consistently work together to provide immediate feedback to students. Teachers typically work in grade-level teams, however, each staff meeting allows for time to discuss and reflect on building practices and instructional strategies. A building monitoring spreadsheet tracks each MAP test administration and the progress of each class in reaching the 70th percentile. South Elementary's overarching goal is to be the top elementary school in the county. This percentile sheet allows for reflection on the progress reaching this goal.

**1b.** Reading/English language arts

South Elementary implements the Read Side by Side program for our English Language Arts instruction which aligns with the Common Core State Standards. Students are exposed to a variety of genres throughout reading instruction. This includes an instructional read aloud, book clubs, and writing instruction. After the whole group instruction, students break into small groups during their book club time to continue to work on modeled skills and strategies. While carrying out this program, many teachers also utilize a station rotation model to provide enrichment and intervention to students within the classroom. Station rotation activities address multiple learning styles paired with student choice. Blended learning approaches are common within the station rotation structure and personalized learning fosters student growth.

Formative assessments and summative assessments are utilized for progress monitoring toward grade-level standards. Data is tracked on Google Sheets and checklists which enable the teacher to conference with students daily and target specific strengths and weaknesses. Assessments are aligned to Ohio's Test Specifications and Learning Standards which helps students understand the design, and increases overall performance on Ohio's State ELA Test.

In the primary grades, teachers implement a writing strategy called RACE. Students are taught to reword the question and answer it by turning it into a statement. Then, students are required to cite evidence from the text. The last step is for students to explain or reflect upon their evidence. This strategy continues through the intermediate grades and is consistent among the staff. Teachers track writing samples using Google Sheets for progress monitoring and utilize the Ohio Department of Education's writing rubric for assessment purposes. The primary grades use a curriculum that has a high level of phonics instruction. Foundational skills are acquired that ensure fluency and comprehension with reading instruction. Teachers engage in guided reading for primary students which allows for students to work at their level growing toward the grade level expectation.

Teachers in the intermediate grades participate in the Global Read Aloud (GRA). Collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving are 21st-century skills that are enhanced through the GRA. Not only do the teachers read an amazing book to their students, but they also make connections with classes outside of the United States to increase global awareness. Technology is used to transform learning while promoting higher-order thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating, and creating, in addition to supporting essential skills to Common Core standards and 21st-century learning. For example, teachers utilize technology platforms such as Flipgrid, Google Meet, Google Slides, and Padlet to communicate with classrooms in other countries during the GRA. Students participate in highly engaging and relevant lessons while developing understandings of how environmental, social, cultural, and economic factors impact the world, all while increasing their love of reading. A culminating celebration is planned at the end of the GRA with a tremendous amount of parental support.

### **1c. Mathematics**

The district's Math curriculum and instruction are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Teachers utilize the Go Math curriculum which consists of textbooks, online virtual lessons, and online personal math training activities. Teachers integrate various other hands-on activity resources, online instruction through Khan Academy, Xtramath, and many other online sites. Each of these resources is used to engage students through various means to meet all students' needs while promoting student inquiry and problem-solving.

Many teachers use a variety of resources to create daily math stations or a daily math workshop. Teachers utilize student data such as the latest Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment scores, state test scores, and chapter pre-assessments to group students for this workshop. Using data, students are grouped based on their needs. Within the workshop, students are given the opportunity to access the math topic in a variety of ways. Students typically meet in small groups allowing the teacher to provide intervention and enrichment for the daily lesson. While the teacher provides small group instruction, students are working in groups to access the day's lesson topic. Students use technology such as Khan Academy, Xtramath or the Go Math website each of which is specifically aligned to each student's needs based on data and student work and assessments. Students also often complete a hands-on activity aligned to the lesson or review of past concepts. Activities are engaging and connect to real-life. These concepts are presented in the form of a game or task cards to allow for movement around the room. This method of instruction allows teachers to provide immediate feedback to students in small groups and directly meet those student needs, while other groups of students are accessing the material in multiple ways to practice with one another.

Throughout math class, teachers utilize standards monitoring sheets to track student progress towards each grade-level standard. Teachers use this data when meeting weekly to plan instruction across subject areas and grade levels allowing collaboration and the ability to provide interventions and enrichment. Students performing above grade level receive enrichment through real-world, project-based learning, and digital enrichment activities on the curriculum website, while others receive opportunity for intervention and reteach lessons necessary for growth.

### **1d. Science**

The district's Science curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The state model curriculum is utilized as a resource ensuring further alignment to standards. Teachers utilize the district science curriculum through the use of textbooks, online lessons, and virtual labs. Students are able to complete virtual labs that invoke curiosity and promote problem-solving skills. When necessary, teachers also use various other resources that support the current area of study. One of those resources is Mystery Science. This website provides engaging lessons that are aligned to the standards, ask thought-provoking questions, and incorporate hands-on activities to engage all students.

Science is the study of the world around us and our science lessons reflect that belief. Students are given the opportunity to utilize the Scientific Method by asking questions, hypothesizing, investigating, analyzing, and sharing their results with peers. Hands-on opportunities are the backbone of our science instruction. Students engage in collaborative activities to help them investigate and learn about the world around them.

In addition, reading and writing are embedded in Science lessons. The Newsela website is utilized to allow students to read about various scientific topics. This website houses articles which can be assigned by the teacher. The articles and reflection questions are individually personalized by adjusting the Lexile level for individual students. In addition, an audio component is also available to assist students with the article and questions. Students engage in a writing component when they write about labs and activities in their science journals. Students can describe the scientific method step-by-step and articulate their investigation and results from their experiments.

Fourth and Fifth-grade students also have the opportunity to experience STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) through our Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program which uses Vex kits to solve a real-world problem. Working collaboratively, students are presented with a challenge in which they discuss, plan, build, experiment, and solve a problem.

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

The social studies curriculum focuses on teaching and learning based on targeted grade-level standards. Each grade level focuses on topics that revolve around history, geography, government, and economics in order to prepare students to be participating citizens. The curriculum and experiences provided by the teachers build a deep understanding of content for students. Student engagement with the social studies content allows for group and partner work. This peer engagement and collaboration allows for an increase in knowledge acquisition, retention of material, and higher-order problem solving and reasoning abilities.

Activities that are developed across grade levels allow for real-world application to the learning standards. Community members, including the Mayor, anchor this learning experience by visiting classrooms and providing real-life lessons in Government. Business leaders present to intermediate students during their economic unit of study. Primary students dress as immigrants and eat food indicative of various regions.

Along with connecting to the real-world, social studies lessons are also project-based. Older students design, manufacture, market, and sell friendship bracelets to their peers. This learning activity increases entrepreneurial skills and empowers students with the knowledge and skills to succeed. Intermediate students also participate in inquiry projects where students are presented with a problem and then conduct research, read and analyze primary resources, and finally present a solution through a student-led discussion, presentation, or essay.

Literacy skills are embedded in social studies lessons as staff teaches students to construct meaning, think critically, and build content knowledge using a variety of texts and web-based tools. Students engage in rich and rigorous evidence-based discussion using writing through specific thought-provoking questions. Cross-curricular experiences allow students to build content awareness using reading and writing skills. Academic vocabulary is focused on throughout instruction. Students research while reading and are asked to analyze and synthesis knowledge. Various resources such as thematic units, virtual field trips, hands-on activities, and choice boards support the Common Core State Standards for Social Studies. These resources allow for student assessment using pre-assessment, post-assessment, and self-assessment opportunities.

#### **1f. For secondary schools:**

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

### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

All South Elementary students, Kindergarten through Fifth grade, participate in Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Technology, and Physical Education one day a week. Leadership opportunities are also available to the student population.

During Visual Arts Class, students engage in and learn about various artistic skills, styles, and techniques. The content aligns with the Ohio Visual Arts Standards. The skills they learn help promote their artistic experiences outside of the classroom with artistic displays around the school, community, and state. The

visual and performing arts departments at the elementary school have the privilege to work together in various Fine Arts Nights throughout the school year. The Visual Arts are represented during these nights with grade-wide artistic displays of student artwork that is seen by family and friends. The Visual Arts department has partnered with a local healthcare facility to have student artwork displayed at the facility for the residents to enjoy every month. Additionally, eight students were selected to have their artwork become part of the permanent collection for the Akron Children's Hospital. For the past two years, the Visual Arts department at our elementary school has participated in the Young People's Art Exhibition and Youth Art Month exhibition in Columbus, Ohio. Two students from our school have had their artwork selected for these exhibitions.

Music Class provides the opportunity to try something new and develop confidence as students master singing, reading music and playing an instrument. Students share their talents by singing and acting at a local nursing and retirement center, participating in the city wide Veteran's Day events and performing musicals for the student body, friends and family. As in other learning environments opportunities to give to others develop essential skills for future citizens. Every child is given a chance to sing, speak, and dance which allows their creativity to develop, teamwork to be established and development of the whole child.

Technology Class helps to prepare the students for success in school while also giving them the tools to be safe and informed digital citizens. Students learn how to research information, create engaging presentations, and learn technology strategies to benefit them throughout their educational journey. The technology teacher is a highly qualified teacher who collaborates weekly with other grade level teachers to add technological learning opportunities, such as purposeful station rotation within the general education classroom. This teamwork nurtures engagement for the diverse learners found in each classroom.

Students are highly engaged in the learning opportunities provided by the Physical Education Program at South Elementary. The overall goal of physical education is to improve physical fitness, increase motor skill development and encourage daily exercise for all the students. During the physical education class students also improve peer relationships through team-building games and activities that enhance their communication skills. The physical education program at South Elementary is an integral part of the overall total education of every child. Students who participate in daily physical activity perform better as students in the classroom. The physical education teacher fosters external connections in the community by supporting the Jump Rope for Heart fundraising event. This event allows students to jump rope, thereby reaching physical fitness goals as well as raising funds for the American Heart Association. South Elementary seeks opportunities in all student experiences at the school to give back to others.

Leadership opportunities are afforded to students in various student clubs and groups. For example, nearly twenty students in Fifth grade are a part of the student council. The democratic process is utilized and the students are required to create posters and give a campaign speech. The elected students work collaboratively to select various community outreach opportunities for the school. Oftentimes student passion leads the focus of fundraising efforts. In the past a bullet proof vest was provided to the local police department for the Canine Officer due to the efforts of a student council fundraiser. The group has coordinated a food drive during the holiday season to provide food for various agencies. The students also coordinate the weekly recycling program at South Elementary. Students gather recyclables from each classroom and take them to the pick-up spot where the city recycling crew gathers them. Student council members meet during the lunch/recess period while volunteer teacher leaders assist the students. Membership in the student council requires students to be in good standing in regard to student conduct. Students dedicate numerous hours throughout the school year promoting goodwill at South Elementary and beyond.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

For the students at South Elementary who are performing below grade level, we have specific plans in place to reach these students. First, any student who is performing below grade level in reading in grades K-3, we place on a Reading Improvement Plan. This plan allows us to provide interventions based on a child's

reading needs. These interventions that are put in place are progress monitored weekly to track the child's progress. In addition, we have set specific blocks of time in our building each day for intervention and enrichment opportunities. The grade level teachers (or grade band) collaborate each week to discuss which students need more intervention on a certain standard, and which students need more of a challenge. This thirty minute intervention block allows for students to receive instruction that is in their zone of proximal development. In order to close the achievement gap for students who are below grade level, it is imperative that students receive instruction on their learning levels. We are able to accomplish this through our teacher collaboration teams, as well as being intentional with our classroom intervention schedule. Lastly, our school building places a high premium on less whole-group, and more small group instruction. Research suggests that educators can reach more students in a small group setting. This allows the teacher to better engage the students, monitor progress, and give feedback in a timely manner. These small group instructional periods allow for flexible grouping on skills that students are ready to reinforce, develop, or introduce. As a result, this allows us to close gaps and grow children in an exponential fashion.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

Nearly 16% of the population at South Elementary are Gifted and Talented Students. These students are identified and grouped with high achieving students in specialized classes taught by Gifted Intervention Specialists. These teachers use the core curriculum while differentiating for individual student needs. The curriculum is compacted, while adding depth, complexity and rigor. These classrooms also use inquiry based projects which encourage engagement in the classroom. Gifted Intervention Specialists are also conscientious to the unique social and emotional needs of gifted students, creating a comfortable learning environment that empowers them to grow.

In order to identify students with gifted abilities, a cognitive IQ test is administered at the end of Second and Fifth grade, identifying creative thinking students as well as students with a superior cognitive ability . Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment is also used three times a year, to identify gifted students in a specific academic area in grades two through five.

A parent support group is in place for parents who have children who are identified as gifted. Teachers and parents work collaboratively to meet the needs of the Gifted students. Students who are not identified but may have high intellectual abilities are also included in flexible groups that provide models from the gifted identified population. Gifted intervention specialists collaborate with general education teachers to allow for this enrichment for individual students. Our philosophy at South Elementary allows for the enrichment to occur without labels of identification being present. We work to develop all children to their highest potential.

### **3c. Special education**

The Intervention Specialists at South Elementary work closely with the general education teachers to provide the least restrictive environment for all students. Teams meet at least once a week, and as often as daily, to discuss students, so that the most appropriate interventions are provided. A myriad of services both in the general education classrooms and in the intervention classrooms are provided for the diverse learners at South Elementary. Progress monitoring of Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals drives the implementation of best practices for each individual student.

The needs of our at-risk and special education students are met through various intervention programs, such as LLI (Leveled Literacy Intervention) and the Orton-Gillingham approach that combines multi-sensory teaching strategies paired with systematic, sequential lessons focused on phonics. One such program has allowed special education students to grow .50 year in Reading growth.

At South Elementary, the disability categories are wide ranging. South Elementary services students with intellectual disabilities and students with multiple disabilities for our entire district and the unit classrooms are tailored to meet those students' specific needs. The Cross Categorical Units service students with intellectual disabilities, visual impairments, hearing impairments, autism, and other health impairments. The Multiple Disabilities Unit services students with multiple disabilities such as epilepsy, Downs Syndrome,

and various severe health concerns. Paraprofessionals are an integral part of the service team. Teachers work closely with the paraprofessionals and provide expert guidance regarding the care of the exceptional children. Paraprofessionals attend various training sessions with resource personnel so that all are knowledgeable about the needs of the child.

All staff at South Elementary are dedicated to the mission that all diverse learners have every opportunity to engage with general education peers. Labels for groups of children are not a focal point, as the school believes that they are all children and entitled to a unified school experience.

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

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

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

South Elementary staff anchors practices based on follow through to achieve and excellence for the students. Our school mission statement calls for all students to be provided the opportunity to achieve their highest potential. Daily plans consider and promote innovative learning environments, both in class and beyond the school house, with rigorous and relevant instruction results. Teachers consistently collaborate to achieve meaningful student centered learning experiences through application of research based instructional strategies as we strive for optimal individualized learning.

Engagement is a key piece of learning. The School strives to promote a nurturing environment of positivity that provides impactful opportunities for students to grow and excel emotionally, socially, and academically. Our colorful and inviting Buddy Bench can be found in the heart of our playground. Students are encouraged to look for and engage with peers during their recess hour who may be struggling to find a connection group or having an off day and who have sought out the Buddy Bench as a safe haven. Children know that in order to have a buddy, that they need to be a buddy. Additionally, throughout the week during the lunch hour, students can be found collaborating with cohorts through student created lunch clubs such as Art Club, Chess Club, Holiday Club, and Animal Club among others.

Not only does the elementary school provide a Buddy Bench and various clubs, but it also has student elected leaders in the student council. These students are encouraged to promote positivity and model stellar behavior to all students. In addition, student council leaders also promote empathy and positivity through various service projects as well. For example, this group leads canned food drives and spirit days in connection with collecting donations for various campaigns such as: Rainbow Connection, Challenger Baseball and St. Judes. The students also coordinate the weekly recycling program at the school.

At the elementary school, we are unified in our student-centered vision that every student matters. It is through this belief that we believe every student is designed to make an impact on this world. In celebration of students' differences we have celebrated an Awareness Day where students learned about different special abilities such as: autism, and hearing impairment and many more. Along with Awareness Day, reward programs range from individual to building-wide programs for exemplary behavior. Consistent expectations also exist throughout the building which support each child's academic, social, and emotional growth.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Parents and families are an integral part of the student success at South Elementary. Student award ceremonies are organized and parents are welcomed to attend in this celebration of achievement for various grade levels. Parents and families begin the year with a meet the teacher night where they are invited to bring their supplies and have an opportunity to see their child's classroom. School supplies are dropped off at the building and families are introduced to one another and launch relationships that grow and are nurtured throughout the year.

The PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) works together with teachers and administration to create a positive learning atmosphere. Through various fundraisers substantial items are purchased for the classroom instruction and learning. The Parent- Teacher Organization is a progressive group of parents who work side by side with teachers and administration to meet the needs of the school goals. Parents attend monthly meetings where a Principal State of School Report is provided. Input and feedback from this active group helps to propel the school community. The PTO group has provided various family networking events for the school community. Stakeholder events such as a school tailgate party before a varsity football game allows for families to grow to know each other. This support creates a culture of connections and focus for the common good regarding the school. Kindergarten parents are encouraged to attend a parent orientation in which they are introduced to school policies, procedures and academics. The school takes pride working collaboratively with local programs, such as the Foster Grandparent Program. This group of retired citizens are utilized to support children with academic needs and assist teachers in assembling educational

activities. The Foster Grandparents also provide social emotional support to students. Relationships with these loving individuals helps to foster student self esteem. Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year in November and February to continue to promote open-communication of students growth and development. Report cards are sent four times a year (every 9 weeks with midterm between). Lastly, the school has an established relationship with Kent State University. Each semester the school hosts pre-service teachers in classrooms at the school. Pre-service teachers learn from a highly qualified staff member and the University provides support for students in our classrooms. Per-Service teachers have been provided the opportunity to attend Literacy Night Events with our families. The relationship between the university and our school is powerful with long lasting benefits resulting in our community at large.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

South Elementary teachers have a cohesive bond in regard to philosophical approaches for student learning that results in a supportive, nurturing, and professional environment. This bond and venerating environment has resulted from a strong district focus and a strong building leader who effectively communicates expectations while recognizing teacher competencies. Teachers grow with confidence and continually advance within the world of best practices. These best practices are learned because of deliberate efforts from the administrator at the school, who honors district initiatives.

Teachers and the principal at the school work to launch these initiatives with fidelity. The most recent district initiative involved professional development opportunities for teachers provided by an educational consultant and school Improvement specialist. In conjunction with the specialized training sessions, the school's Building Leadership Team (BLT) further worked with the building principal to formulate plans and create building initiatives to carry out with the staff. Successful implementation of high quality action steps for lesson planning resulted across all grade levels at the building. Teachers on the Building Leadership team taught specific steps to all staff members and then worked with them for guidance and support through the implementation process. However, learning within this process oscillates among all teachers, the principal, and administrators. Leaders and administrators became learners, and the learners became leaders. All staff members feel valued, appreciated, and vital to the end goal of student learning and growth. Monthly staff meetings allow for teachers to present to others and share valuable and successful strategies. Discussion and reflection during staff meetings are a common practice used to increase teacher capacity. Professional Learning Communities have meetings amongst grade levels. These meetings are scheduled and attended by critical staff. Norms for these meetings are created by teacher teams and are respected. The building is fortunate to have like-minded educators. These educators work together for the common good for students but also care and respect each other. A Sunshine Committee fosters care and kindness to staff members when needed.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The principal respects employees as professionals and offers encouragement and suggestions as needed. The principal has established a shared vision and purpose, and clearly explains expectations. The principal is an instructional leader in every aspect of the building. The administrator is knowledgeable with curriculum and using data to inform instruction and in helping teachers do that as well. The Principal has a clear and unyielding vision of how great our school can be and inspires her teachers every day to make it happen. In turn, teachers rise to the challenge and inspire their students to rise as well. The Principal is a transformational leader who cultivates leaders in others through constant collaboration and communication. The Principal is often visible throughout the day, taking an interest in the classroom learning. The principal is always willing to meet with a teacher when necessary and step in and help with tough situations.

The principal is an effective communicator, follows protocol, and follows through on rules and guidelines. The principal is tasked with ensuring that the building is functioning smoothly, that schedules and structures are created that will allow the teacher to be the most effective in reaching students. Safety and security are the primary responsibility of the principal, as well. The principal has clearly defined plans for daily routines and safety drills, given in detail to the teachers for easy reference when a situation in the building may arise. The principal is comfortable in each and every classroom and is able to collaborate and problem-solve with staff to devise solutions to problems.

The principal of the school knows her staff and their areas of expertise well. This knowledge enables her to effectively choose teacher leaders for important school projects or committees. She empowers her teachers to take active roles in the projects that are the backbone for our amazing school.

The principal manages numerous areas essential to building staff morale, improving instruction, completing observations, and communicates with others and the community at large.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Diversity, compassion, collaboration, and acceptance are words that describe this exceptional school. When you visit South Elementary you see teachers and students smiling. The school is a warm and exciting environment for students and teachers. A positive climate and culture that is nurtured by leadership allows for focus on the whole child at South Elementary. School culture reflects the way teachers and other staff members work together and the set of beliefs, values, and assumptions they share. This focus is a practice that allows for South Elementary Schools' success. The school is the largest elementary school in the district and allows for acceptance and compassion for all students who attend the school. Teachers care for students deeply. Students are taught by accomplished teachers who nurture and guide students for future endeavors. The secret is out regarding this school setting. Curriculum, programming, resources are variables that contribute to student learning in many schools in the nation, but building relationships with students and families is a natural practice that South Elementary emulates. This positive school climate and school culture promote students' ability to learn. Students and their families know that the school has high expectations for learning and behavior management. All students can learn at this school and are expected to work to their potential.

Culture is so important, especially to young, impressionable children, because it establishes behavior. This highly rated school has a positive school culture that values high academic achievement. The school works tirelessly to meet state standards and commits to showing growth for student learning. The path is simple. Follow the standards for learning with high yielding instructional strategies. This focus is supported by the schools high achievement scores over time. The culture allows for teachers to have fun with students. Teachers create engaging activities that anchor learning. At the close of the school year, the school community including stakeholders, begin to get excited about the end of the year dance performed by the staff. What song will they use? How will they do it? You will read posts on Facebook from the community and parents as the anticipation grows. Over 3,000 views last year were registered on Youtube once the dance was launched. The school allows for whole child development to be considered. The love for our students is real and palpable. Our school community are proud of our youngsters and the staff at South Elementary. We have a strong commitment to work hard and do what is best for students. The culture at the school allows for teachers expressing a shared vision and this results in students succeeding.

An intentional effort to prioritize the school culture allows for the aura in our school to be felt the minute you arrive in the building. Values, beliefs and actions are tightly reinforced. This practice allows for high achievement and the whole child to thrive in the learning environment. The school is a special place. We meet our challenges with unity amongst staff members and in partnership with our stakeholders. This practice that allows for the success at South Elementary.