

**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) [X] Title I [ ] Charter [ ] Magnet [ ] Choice

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

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

School Mailing Address 303 Academy Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Hiltons State VA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 24258-6067

County Scott County

Telephone (276) 386-7430 Fax (276) 386-3192

Web site/URL https://hes.scottschools.com E-mail kelsey.taylor@scottschools.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. John Ferguson E-mail john.ferguson@scottschools.com  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Scott County Public Schools Tel. (276) 386-6118

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. David Templeton  
(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):
- 7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 3 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 3 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 13 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	11	13	24
K	9	8	17
1	6	7	13
2	8	9	17
3	6	8	14
4	16	12	28
5	8	5	13
6	5	6	11
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>	69	68	137

\*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 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 96 % White
  - 0 % 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: 11%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<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	7
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	15
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	142
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.11
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

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

Russian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %

1 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 64 %

Total number students who qualify: 87

8. Students receiving special education services: 23 %

32 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>1</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>9</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>20</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: 7

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	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	9
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	5
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 15:1

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%	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.

<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.

"Every Child, Every Opportunity." It is our school mission that every child be given the opportunity to learn and grow. We believe that children must have their physical, social, and emotional needs met before they can take risks and learn.

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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Hilton Elementary is a Title I PK-sixth grade public elementary school nestled in the mountains of rural Southwest Virginia, just a couple of miles from historic Moccasin Gap where Daniel Boone and his companions carved the Wilderness Road into Kentucky in 1775. One of our most unique features is that we serve and have the support of two different communities located in two different counties in Virginia. While our school was built to serve the Hiltons area in the mid-seventies, the closure of the Mendota Elementary School in Washington County in the early 1990s gave us the opportunity to open our doors to families in that community, as well. When we talk about community, we are referring to both areas. Agriculture and Eco-Tourism are the primary industries within the communities.

Combined, the communities consist of just over 2,000 people, many of whom commute to nearby Kingsport, Tennessee for employment. As with all of Southwest Virginia, the communities have experienced an increase in economic challenges over the past decade due to closures of nearby factories and coal mining operations. Southwest Virginia has been hit especially hard by the nationwide opioid epidemic which has caused a dramatic increase in the number of students who suffer from adverse childhood experiences. Therefore, it is important to meet their basic physiological and emotional needs before helping them succeed academically. Determination and love for our students has allowed our school to help them rise above these challenges to exceed state performance goals.

A large part of our success in this is due to the support of the communities. They are as invested in us as we are in them. People in our communities generously donate the resources they have – time, money, or a helping hand – to benefit our school. Community organizations host Back-To-School nights, provide school supplies for students in need, and volunteer labor to maintain the front garden. Their assistance may be due in part to the fact that 85% of our staff live in Scott County, 65% of our staff graduated from Gate City High School, our feeder high school, and several of our staff attended Hilton Elementary School. These statistics are vital in developing the relationships that are necessary for student growth. Because we live here, we understand the family dynamics of our students and how to help them with life outside of school. Most importantly, we have the support of the community to do this. Hilton Elementary is, and always has been, the heartbeat of the communities it serves.

If the school is the heartbeat of the community, the students are the heart of our school. Everyone in our school believes that while students are in the building, they should come first. To encourage this, the building administrators have worked to develop a school culture that revolves around an “I’m All In!” leadership style, designed to exemplify being fully committed to doing everything possible to help each individual student succeed. Administration dedicates the majority of their school day to being present and actively involved in the educational process at a hands-on level. The principal and assistant teach remediation and extension lessons daily to targeted groups of students. School leaders serve as an example which sets a positive climate within the building where students and teachers alike feel supported.

## **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

Hilton Elementary School provides a rigorous student-focused curriculum. Our teachers believe that differentiated teaching is a key to success. They use small groups, whole groups, and individualized settings to meet the needs of all learners. Our curriculum is data driven and aligned with the Virginia Standards of Learning. Student progress is tracked in grades PreK-third with the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening assessment (PALs), teacher reports, and weekly conferences between administration and reading/math specialists. Grades 3-6 track progress through our Region 7 Comprehensive Instructional Program (CIP) quarterly benchmark tests, progress on Interactive Achievement tests, weekly conferences between administration and reading/math specialist and Standards of Learning (SOL) Tests. Students who receive Title I or special education services are provided individualized instruction that focuses on the student's specific educational needs. When teachers see that a student is not responding to the core curriculum, remediation is provided in small groups or students are pulled out for individual instruction.

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

In grades PreK-2 we focus on developing the foundational skills needed to be a strong reader. The teachers provide a balanced reading approach that includes phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, word study, grammar, and writing. The early childhood grade levels use the Superkids reading program combined with teaching units built around high quality children's literature picture books to help develop these skills and keep student interest high. Superkids is a comprehensive English language arts curriculum crafted for grades K-2 using evidence-based literacy practices. This research-based program follows a unique systematic and explicit instructional path through engaging, increasingly complex text. We employ an all hands-on deck method to help all students become strong readers. The master schedule was developed to ensure that all teachers can receive support during their language arts block. Our physical education, teacher, administration, Title I teacher, paraprofessionals and librarian all meet daily with targeted small groups or individual students who either need additional support or to provide a challenge for our high performing students. Our reading specialist employs many strategies to help close the gaps with struggling students. Formal and informal assessments are used to track student progress and determine remediation grouping. Teachers differentiate and provide direct instruction with small groups, leveled readers, and reading programs. Reading is enhanced with online programs that personalize reading and writing practice and can be assigned to students through Google Classroom. By using integrated technology we are able to differentiate lessons for all learners.

In grades 3-6, we focus on children reading to learn while we further develop their comprehension skills and instill the desire to become a lifelong reader. Using selected novel studies, teachers provide explicit instruction that addresses higher-level literacy skills in vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and public speaking. Students are able to learn all the skills outlined in our Standards of Learning while reading high-interest, award winning novels and high-quality nonfiction materials. Upper grade students enjoy taking part in a monthly book club led by our media specialist. Students read and discuss a new novel each month and are exposed to a variety of genres throughout the year. Our division has implemented a countywide writing initiative that begins in kindergarten and builds each year to help develop proficient writers ready to enter middle school in seventh grade. Our students participate in weekly writing prompts sponsored by the local newspaper. Each Wednesday the newspaper publishes a few of the students' paragraphs and young authors read their published work over the school intercom. Every semester the county writing coach visits our schools to collaborate with English teachers and administration. This team reviews student writing samples using a rubric to monitor student progress and provide specialized writing instruction where needed. The teachers track student progress with region 7 benchmark quarterly assessments, Interactive Achievement/PowerTest, ReadWorks, Powertest, Education Galaxy Reports, teacher assessments, and the VA Reading SOL test.

### **1c. Mathematics**

Our teachers strive to make math useful, exciting, engaging, and fun to inspire our students to be logical thinkers and problem solvers. Our teachers are shifting our curriculum beyond the traditional paper and pencil. They are challenging our students, but also keeping differentiation in mind for each student. Our teachers want students to “discover” mathematical concepts through problem-based learning. Our curriculum is the Virginia Standards of Learning. Teachers plan their lessons and pacing guides based on the Region 7 CIP Pacing and Curriculum Guide. One of our key strategies for math instruction lies in teaching our students to apply math skills to real-world activities. This includes the use of a variety of manipulatives, projects, number talks, interactive whiteboards, and student demonstrations. We are fortunate to have a dedicated math specialist who helps our teachers bring in different strategies and provides them with continual professional development. All math teachers use highly effective classroom routines to build number sense and encourage mathematical discourse. Math teachers across the region are able to collaborate and share resources and strategies using a dedicated Google Classroom. This communication ensures that teachers are teaching the correct skills and using the same language to teach those skills. Like reading and language arts, small group instruction and multiple forms of daily assessments from teacher observations to student demonstrations are used across all grade levels. Teachers use Powertest to administer online pre/post-testing for each math unit in grades 3-6 in order to plan instruction and ensure mastery of content. CIP quarterly benchmark test data is also analyzed by faculty to formulate instructional plans and streamline student interventions.

### **1d. Science**

The Science curriculum follows the Virginia Standards of Learning, and lessons are planned to address each standard across all grade levels. Teacher observation coupled with interactive activities and experiments makes up the majority of our daily assessment strategies. Summative assessment comes in the form of performance-based assessments, teacher made tests, and quarterly benchmarks. As a school we have also embraced the use of STEAM to enhance our science curriculum. We aim to spark a lifelong love of science at an early age. We have school-wide STEAM challenges each month chosen by the administration to be completed at home with parents. This helps us engage our parents in these challenging activities. Our grade levels have STEAM days where they problem solve and use skills developed from our science curriculum. Each summer we host a free two day STEAM Camp open to all students to come and participate in fun and challenging activities. Our 5th and 6th grade students have been piloting a robotics program for our division for the past year. They worked with the Dash robot to learn the basic skills for coding. They then, in turn, showcased these skills in a division workshop.

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

Teachers follow the Virginia Standards of Learning, using materials developed by the Region 7 CIP Program and the yearly 4th Grade VA Studies SOL test to monitor progress. As a school, our goal is for students to develop a respect for their rights and rights of others while becoming responsible citizens. By the time our students complete sixth grade, they understand how society establishes governing institutions and distributes power and authority, and they have the skills necessary to adapt to an ever-changing society. Our teachers strive to make history tangible and promote citizenship skills. Students present biography reenactments, build dioramas, and help with citizenship projects around school, like picking up trash and helping set up the gym for programs. Often community members are invited to talk to students. The local VA National Guard comes each year to show our 6th graders how to properly raise, lower, and fold the flags. Volunteer firemen teach students about fire safety and their role as firemen. Chapter 979 of the Vietnam Veterans of America visits annually to share their experiences with students. This was a program that started at Hilton Elementary school and spread to a Tri-State area. Now, our veterans work with chapters in other regions of the country to establish similar programs there. It is our honor to have been a part of this. Our students have real conversations with the veterans, making history tangible. Each year our 6th grade class takes a trip that focuses on history. They have recently been to Washington, D.C. and Williamsburg, Virginia. Members from our community help fund these trips and see the importance of these real-life experiences. In PK-2, students complete project-based assessments to apply what they learn through discussion, teacher-made tests, and their actions.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

Hilton Elementary houses two preschool programs. A full day pre-kindergarten program for students four years of age and an Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) program for children ages 3-5 with special needs. Both programs use the Sing, Spell, Read, and Write Preschool curriculum and the Happily Ever After curriculum developed by Rowland Reading Foundation. Teachers plan developmentally appropriate activities for the students which are taught in small groups through a play-based pedagogy. Students enrolled in the ECSE are able to receive integrated speech, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy services to help them meet their IEP goals.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Physical education is provided to all students in order to educate them on the development of healthy lifestyle choices. Our physical education teacher strives to help students develop into well-adjusted individuals: physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. Our PE program motivates all students to be lifelong movers who understand and participate in a variety of activities, games, and sports. Our program also works on developing skills that are then showcased at a division wide field day. This gives the students a chance to participate in track events and interact with students across our division to develop teamwork and sportsmanship skills. Also, through our physical education program we have partnered with a local health organization, Project Towards No Tobacco Use (TNT), a school-based prevention program designed to delay the initiation and reduce the use of tobacco by middle-school children. Upon completion of the program, students should be able to describe the course of tobacco addiction, the consequences of using tobacco, and the prevalence of tobacco use among peers.

Our Art curriculum is designed to provide instruction in basic art skills and provide enrichment opportunities. Students are allowed time to explore and are encouraged to utilize their own creativity. All students participate in Art for 30 minutes bi-weekly. We showcase our artists at the yearly division wide Art Extravaganza. At the event, families and community members are invited to see work by our talented students/artists. Our upper grade students also participate in a partnership with the Virginia Fine Arts Museum located in Richmond. They are able to tour and analyze art virtually in a museum located over seven hours away in our state capitol.

We have an outstanding music program that allows our student's opportunities to learn to read music, test and play a variety of musical instruments, and explore a variety of musical genres. All students participate in music for 30 minutes bi-weekly. We also showcase the skills of our musicians at our Art Extravaganza. Students in grade 3-6 have the opportunity to be a part of a division wide chorus that performs throughout the school year. Students in grades 4-6 have the unique opportunity to participate in an after-school Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM) program. Students work in small groups with music professors from a local college to learn to play instruments and music associated with Appalachian tradition.

Because HES was originally built following an open school floor plan, our library is literally the center of our school, and students have to pass through it many times a day. Our librarian works on a regular basis to coordinate with our classroom teachers to integrate standards into her lessons. Students are taught how to use the library and a variety of media sources, introduced to a multitude of books, and encouraged to check out books on a weekly basis. Our librarian challenges our students to read a variety of books by implementing a yearlong 40 book challenge. Her goal is to have students read 40 books of a variety of genres appropriate for each individual student's reading level. The school librarian hosts a book fair each school year, with a variety of fun and educational books available for purchase. Our PTO and community volunteers work at the Book Fair to help students purchase level-appropriate books. A local church and our Foster Godparents donate money to ensure that every student in the school has the opportunity to purchase a book.

Our academic schedule also includes weekly guidance classes taught by our school counselor. Lessons are designed to teach life skills, study skills, social skills, career exploration, and character building. All

students participate in weekly thirty-minute lessons. Our program also focuses on the needs of students by using individual or small group counseling. Major Clarity, a program that matches 6th graders to possible career choices based on their interests is sponsored by our local United Way. Students dealing with adverse childhood experiences are referred to a Crisis Team which consists of school administration, guidance counselor, school psychologist and school social worker. This team works with the student and their family to coordinate appropriate services.

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

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

A significant contributor to our school's success is how we identify students in need of remediation and work as a team to meet those needs early. Our teachers use a variety of data and screening tools to identify students at risk. In the early childhood grades (K-3) all students are screened for reading readiness using the VA Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS). This tool is administered by a trained reading specialist and has proven to be a great indicator of students who are in need of referral to our Response to Intervention (RTI) Team. We also use Education Galaxy and Powertest to administer grade level pre-tests in reading and mathematics. Using this data we are able to identify students at risk of falling below grade level in a core subject. Once a student is identified for RTI they become a "Target Student" and are assigned a teacher mentor within the school who manages their case, coordinates their services, and becomes an intervention provider and cheerleader for the student. These students are closely monitored, and the mentor and classroom teacher collaborate almost daily regarding what remediation should be implemented to help this student catch up to their peers. As students meet personal goals we celebrate their success with praise and recognition. Simply put, we work efficiently as a school team to do everything we can to get these students back on track and working at grade level. It is not uncommon for teachers, specialists, and even administrators to provide remediation and reteaching for a target student before or after school to ensure that the student is receiving the help they need and deserve. With the multi-tiered RTI process, type and rate of extra instruction is adjusted depending on the changing needs of our students.

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

Just like with underachieving students we work efficiently as a team to challenge our above grade level students. The most common intervention used is flexible, differentiated grouping to extend lessons to a higher level. Mentorship opportunities with same-age peers and younger peers are also provided. HES also has a strong gifted program that is led by the administration. These students identified through a testing process are pulled weekly to do activities with their academic peers. During this pull-out they are presented with a variety of academic challenges presented through project-based learning. These students are also active in our division gifted program. Our gifted and talented students get to participate in a variety of learning experiences alongside their academic peers from other schools within the division. These opportunities help students not only gain academic knowledge but improve social and communication skills needed in today's society. In working towards preparing our students to be college and career ready, we plan opportunities for them to explore colleges and careers both virtually and locally. Gifted students are active in the DreamWakers program, a virtual program that allows them to meet and interview professionals from across the United States. We do not have a wide variety of jobs in our area, so this program allows the students to explore careers they would never have had access to before. Locally, students partner with the Career and Technical School to explore potential career avenues and interests. During these visits students have participated in hands-on learning in fields like welding, culinary arts, computer science, and veterinary medicine. We pride ourselves on connecting these students with positive experiences.

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

HES is historically a high-performing school which also includes our special populations including our students with disabilities. Our students with disabilities require specialized instruction that our highly qualified special education teachers provide. We pride ourselves on having a special education co-teacher setting. In this setting, there is a general education teacher, as well as a special education teacher to support students with disabilities from start to finish. The co-teaching model is inclusive meaning the makeup of the

classroom includes both students with and without an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Students are pulled into small groups, based on student need, to gain valuable intensive subject area instruction. HES has seen great success with this model due to the relationships between the general education and special education teachers. They both contribute from the planning of classroom activities to the implementation of lessons. Special education teachers are also responsible for administering all statewide assessments to ensure all testing accommodations are provided and accurately followed to meet the specific needs of each student. Student accommodations are based on the individual needs of each student and are determined through a team decision at the student's IEP meeting. Our ECSE preschool teacher is able to develop strong ties with families when they enter the program at HES. We are then able to develop long-term relationships that greatly help promote academic success of this special population of students as they grow. Within our special education program, students can access physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy. Therapists make every effort to incorporate grade-level curriculum, such as spelling, vocabulary, reading, and math to aid students in improving skills that are used daily in the general education classroom thus improving overall academic performance.

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

Our school has a very low percentage of students who receive this service. However, we embrace the needs of all students. Our ELL students receive services in and out of the classroom. They have access to a coordinator of the program who assist the student with any need in the classroom. Our reading specialist also provides ELL students with extra help in the classroom. Students receive daily small group help and in whole group instruction. We also work to ensure their parents feel a part of the community by contacting them to invite them to our events and programs.

**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:**

The halls are adorned with large photos of our students and inspiring quotes and messages as a reminder of why we are here and who we truly work for. Teachers first develop classroom procedures and routines, an important precursor to teaching and learning. Relationships and genuine rapport with students are valued as important, and, in turn, we see very few disruptions due to discipline issues. Students are expected to be responsible, always do their best, and treat others with respect and kindness. Every Friday we recognize students and staff who have been nominated as a “Gold Medalist” and they are rewarded with a special lunch donated by a local restaurant.

By beginning each day with morning choice activities we have seen schoolwide tardies decrease and daily attendance increase. Replacing the old routine of morning work and worksheets with student choice activities such as puzzles, art, board games, engineering kits and STEM bins makes better use of the time before the official school day begins to warm up their minds, collaborate with peers and tap into their creativity. When the bell rings at 8:15 students are awake, engaged and ready to begin the day.

Classrooms within the school are busy places, bustling with the sound of children collaborating on assignments and working in small groups. Teachers believe in the power of academic language and that students should be active participants in the classroom. Students are engaged in lessons through room transformations in which whatever they are studying becomes a temporary theme of the classroom with exciting lessons integrated across subject areas. Laptops are 1:1 for students in grades first through sixth with plans to add kindergarten within the next school year. Assignments and virtual projects can be assigned through Google Classroom. Assessment is varied and teachers provide students with opportunities for computer-based testing, authentic assessments, rubric-based grading as well as more traditional paper pencil testing.

Over sixty percent of our students come from homes living in poverty. We know proper nutrition is essential to student engagement, so, every day as part of our dinner program, we prepare a free meal for any student who wishes to take one as they board the bus. We are able to further help families by sending home weekend backpacks of food, providing a free after school program, ensuring students have proper dental care with a mobile dentist, connecting students with a Secret Godparent, and working alongside our school social worker to ensure families have access to social programs and agencies.

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

A parent of a student new to our school recently commented “Never have we experienced a school to feel so much like a family, The teachers and staff just care so much about our children.” This statement in a nutshell summarizes the culture of Hilton Elementary. We strive to provide a welcoming and supporting environment to our students and families.

The school and home relationship is important, so we make every effort to empower families to take an active role in their children’s education. Families are made to feel welcome and valued when they enter the school. Parents and grandparents are invited to school on special occasions for breakfast and lunch with their children. A classroom volunteer program trains parents and grandparents to help with tasks and events within the school. We request face-to-face meetings with families at the first sign of student issues. By working as a team and starting early we are able to develop a home/school connection which helps students overcome hurdles that arise in their pathway toward success.

Our school and community have embraced the idea of “Every Child, Every Opportunity”. We know that we must meet the basic needs of students if we are going to expect high academic achievement. There are many programs and initiatives that we are embracing to meet these needs. One of the most innovative programs that we use is the Secret Godparent Program. Administration and teachers work together to identify students who need extra attention in different ways, including meeting basic needs such as clothing,

food, toiletries, emotional pick-me-ups, or moral support. These students are given a “Godparent” from our community, who provides for that child's needs. The sponsor may send snack money, buy a pair of shoes, provide Christmas gifts, or send a simple letter of encouragement throughout the school year. Our students never know the name of their Godparent. However, our students know that there is someone out there thinking of them who cares for them. This program has been a huge success for our students and ensures that our local community continues to be a connected stakeholder in our school. We have had many community members ask to keep their child throughout their school career because they are invested in the success of this child. Lasting partnerships with local churches and civic groups, such as Rotary United, United Way, and Ruritan, allow us to provide for students who need school supplies, shoes and coats, and weekend food bags. Our school also is a Foster Grandparent School. The Foster Grandparent Program is a unique opportunity for senior citizens in our community. These adults go through special training with the Mountain Empire Older Citizens, an organization who recruits and trains persons over the age of 65 to be classroom helpers in the elementary grades. We have two very dedicated Foster Grandparents who have been with our school for several years. They work five days a week helping both teachers and students in our kindergarten and second grade classrooms.

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

Professional development in our school offers a variety of options for our staff. Teachers are given the opportunity to have professional development face-to-face, online, or blended presentation with follow-up support provided by administration and coaches. Our administration and specialist lead book studies that are conducted through Google Classroom on relevant topics. Our division is a member of Radford University ASSET program, which provides self-paced, competency-based, online professional development to help rural teachers meet the needs of all students in today’s increasingly challenging classrooms. As our teachers progress through this online PD they also earn graduate level credits.

Many of our teachers already possess rich and valuable experiences that they share with their colleagues during after school professional development. We currently are a mentor school with other schools in our division. Teachers from other schools come and observe our teachers and their practices. This is a benefit not only to other schools but to our teachers as it encourages them to reflect on their own practices. Some of our teacher leaders have also presented at the division level and at state conferences. Our division provided a unified professional development with three other divisions in Region 7 with guest speaker Manny Scott, one of the original Freedom Writers. Teachers found this training motivating and inspiring. Mr. Scott talked about the importance of loving students and having high expectations for all of them. This was a great motivation to start the school year.

Teachers at HES are encouraged to take risks in their classrooms. They are provided with materials and resources necessary to help create confident and successful learners. Our teachers are provided daily time for planning and communicating between grade levels. The administration supports classroom teachers by providing direct interventions to students at all levels. A staff member is recognized weekly for special contributions to our school and rewarded with a lunch on Friday from a local restaurant. Every May we celebrate teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week. We have a variety of activities and events to show how important they are to our school. Our community demonstrates appreciation by hosting meals and providing teachers with extra classroom supplies. We know a big key to our success is ensuring our teachers feel valued and respected.

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

Hilton Elementary School is a warm and welcoming environment and the community has set high expectations for all students. The goal of stakeholders is to ensure that all students are encouraged to reach their potential regardless of their background. There is a strong sense of community valued among all stakeholders as well as shared leadership with staff and students. Everyone cares for one another and the success of the building and its students.

The leadership style of the current administration is characterized by visibility in all facets of the day. On a daily basis, the principal and assistant principal greet students as they enter the building, observe educators

and instruction, lead small groups in instruction, and monitor the cafeteria and playground, thus building relationships with students. The administration is considered to be instructional leaders, advocate of students and staff, and facilitator of relationships with parents and community members.

School leadership is effective primarily because the principal and assistant principal value the ideas and opinions of a highly qualified teaching staff. Risk taking is encouraged, and teachers are given the freedom to try new ideas that spark student engagement. The principal and assistant principal work together to ensure the climate and culture of the school is positive and inclusive, where teachers feel their input is valued. Our administrators devote uninterrupted time everyday teaching small groups and supporting teachers in the ways that matter most. The principal and assistant principal make spending time with students a priority. The school leadership holds expectations high and consider themselves as an integral part of the educational process.

The administration believes that students who are economically disadvantaged can prosper academically and socially through high expectations, guidance, and mentoring. The administration meets regularly with the leadership team to evaluate the effectiveness of academics and school culture. The administration leads Response to Intervention (RTI) and data meetings with teachers on a regular basis to discuss the strengths and weaknesses. If students fail to show adequate progress, strategies are suggested and then implemented. Teachers and administration share the belief that failure is not an option. Expectations are set high for students and teachers alike, we all work hard to reach school-wide goals and we have fun celebrating successes.

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

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Our motto “Every Child, Every Opportunity” empowers the faculty and staff of Hilton Elementary School to ensure that all students are provided with every opportunity to learn and thrive. Our greatest asset at Hilton Elementary School is hands down our faculty and staff. By creating a school environment where children are foremost valued and regarded as important we have seen the success of our students rise each and every year. The one practice that makes the biggest difference for our students is how much the faculty cares for every student in the building. This can best be described as a “Maslow greater than Blooms” mentality. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. As a school community we work together to ensure that these needs are met for the students attending our school. Effective communication between teachers and administrators about student concerns coupled with the dedication of the school/community team we are able to attend to the emotional, physical and psychological needs of our children. By meeting students right where they are and creating a place where Maslow’s needs are fulfilled we are able to provide students an environment where they feel safe and empowered to excel within the classroom and school.

Several years ago when the Virginia Standards of Learning changed and became increasingly more rigorous, we also had to adjust teaching strategies to meet the mark. Administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals all had extensive training to dissect every state standard and better align resources and activities to increase higher level thinking opportunities from students. Benjamin Bloom’s framework was used as a model to strengthen how educators plan and deliver content and the focus was moved to students being a more active participant in their education. By combining the principles from these two theorists and cultivating it as a core belief we have been able to build crucial relationships with our students which in turn has yielded happy, healthy and self-motivated kids who enter our building every day eager to learn.