

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2021 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 Dr. Carrie Broquard  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 5701 Broad Branch Road NW  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Washington State DC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 20015-2541

County District Of Columbia

Telephone (202) 282-0118 Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://www.lafayettehsa.org/ E-mail carrie.broquard@k12.dc.gov

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\* Lewis Ferebee E-mail lewis.ferebee@k12.dc.gov  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Columbia Public School District Tel. (202) 442-5885

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 Frazier O'Leary  
(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, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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 current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 64 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 14 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 22 High schools
  - 17 K-12 schools
- 117 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

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, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	39	40	79
K	71	81	152
1	85	74	159
2	80	78	158
3	71	68	139
4	65	59	124
5	66	63	129
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>	477	463	940

\*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):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 4 % Asian
  - 10 % Black or African American
  - 8.4 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0.3 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 70.7 % White
  - 6.5 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 3%

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, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	32
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	940
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, Swedish, Dutch, Amharic, Italian, Oromo, Chinese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Greek, Hindi, Icelandic, Malayalam, Russian, Filipino, Telugu, Tigrinya, Arabic, Creole, Czech, Finnish, Hebrew, Igbo, Latvian, Thai, Wolof

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 6 %  
60 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3 %

Total number students who qualify: 29

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

101 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>13</u> Autism	<u>9</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>15</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>10</u> Developmental Delay	<u>32</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>6</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. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	4
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	45
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	33
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

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 22:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	97%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2020.

<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. 2004

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

Lafayette is an inclusive, caring community committed to peace, equity, social emotional learning, and arts integration where every child is loved and respected.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

Lafayette began the 2020-2021 school year virtually. Students logged in four days per week to receive synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Each day began with morning meeting to allow for a focus on SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) components to build classroom community, review of daily math and/or ELA (English Language Arts) skills, preview of the daily schedule, and any special announcements and assignments. Instructional blocks were held in 90-minute increments for ELA and math. Science, social studies, and specials were given in 30-minute blocks. Lafayette also introduced “Kid Connect” which offers a variety of virtual clubs.

On February 1, 2021 Lafayette transitioned to hybrid instruction. Students began entering the building on a bi-weekly rotation for grades 3-5. Students in grades K-2 were placed in am and pm cohorts and came to school daily for a half-day of in-person instruction. Morning meetings, science, social studies, and specials were held virtually for all students. Students in the building received ELA and math instruction in person; and teachers held small group instruction for virtual students.

Starting on April 19, we will transition again to allow all our families wanting in-person school to attend full-time. We will continue to offer virtual instruction for any families who choose that option. Lafayette has welcomed back more students in person than any other school in our city with over 700 students attending in person as of February 1.

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

N/A - Students who live within the school's boundaries have a right to attend beginning in kindergarten.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Lafayette Elementary, the largest public elementary school in Washington, D.C., is by design a close-knit community educating more than nine hundred students from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Originally built in 1928, we reimagined our space during a 2015 renovation that allowed us to create a cozy, nurturing environment despite our ever-expanding enrollment. Our welcoming Great Hall flows into a library and technology space flanked by two, tiered staircases each adorned by a mobile installed during the renovation. These massive works feature dancing, colorful shapes designed by our students working side-by-side with a local artist.

Providing an arts-infused curriculum is an essential component of Lafayette's academic program. Experience has proven to us that using the arts to teach fosters student engagement, leads to greater retention of concepts and skills and helps to level the playing field for those who may learn differently. Music and visual art classes continue despite the pandemic and online learning. Students have recorded inspiring choral pieces and produced exquisite works of art performed and displayed during virtual gatherings. 'Informance' is a term we have coined to capture the spirit of the joyful performances each grade level produces at least once a year to share our learning with others.

Centrally located on our second floor overlooking the Great Hall, Lafayette's Peace Room is a fitting home for our unique, innovative Peace of Mind Program. The cornerstone of our commitment to kindness, compassion and the education of the whole child, the Peace of Mind Curriculum provides mindfulness, social emotional learning, conflict resolution, neuroscience, and social justice lessons that begin in Pre-K and continue through fifth grade. Peace of Mind was created by a Lafayette teacher and piloted with our students and has now been adopted by schools in thirty-three states and eleven countries.

Our commitment to social emotional learning and social justice are long established hallmarks of the Lafayette experience and are exemplified by our school rules: "Speak Mindfully, Act Mindfully and Move Mindfully." These tenets ensure every member of our community feels valued, loved, and empowered to make the world a better place.

Our Lafayette Bears put these principles into practice in awe inspiring ways. A troubling part of our neighborhood's history, recently revealed, provided an opportunity for students in our social justice club SPARK (Students Planning a Revolution of Kindness) to advocate in favor of renaming the park and recreation center adjacent to Lafayette's grounds. Known now as Lafayette-Pointer Park, thanks in part to testimony our students gave before the City Council, the new name remembers Captain George Pointer, once enslaved, who bought his freedom and became a prominent businessman. Lafayette is built on the land Pointer's descendants owned until the 1920s when they were paid a fraction of its value and forced to move, so that the government could build a park and school for White families moving into the neighborhood. We are every day inspired by our students' advocacy.

As James Baldwin said, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." Situated as we are within the Nation's capital, we daily witness the vicissitudes of protests for social change and its resistance as they unfold within our city. As a mostly White school within a mostly Black and African American city we believe it is incumbent upon us to educate our students and ourselves as a staff about racial equity. Under the guidance of our Racial Equity Committee, we are beginning the challenging work of examining ourselves and our practice through an equity lens. We use a Racial Equity Scorecard to apply that lens to curriculum, texts, and activities to ensure we are planning for equity of voice and cultural relevance. This year, rather than simply celebrating Black History Month, we embarked on a Black Lives Matter Year of Purpose. Through numerous activities such as classroom read-alouds, professional development, and arts integration projects, we delve into the thirteen guiding principles of the Black Lives Matter movement. This Year of Purpose keeps racial equity at the forefront of our thinking as a community.

Our four dedicated special education classes spanning kindergarten through fifth grade demonstrate our commitment to equity and inclusion. Our most vulnerable students are integrated into every aspect of life at Lafayette and enrich us all with their presence.



Lafayette was previously awarded the National Blue Ribbon in 2004. Since then, our population has more than doubled and we have grown in many other ways. One thing that has remained constant is our dedication to our students. Our commitment to peace and mindfulness, arts integration, inclusion, and racial equity demonstrate that Lafayette is a school that cares deeply about educating the whole child. We are preparing our children to succeed academically, to be happy and healthy, and to do good in the world. What could be more important?

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

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

At Lafayette we implement a standards-aligned curriculum that aims to ensure all students reach their full potential through rigorous and joyful learning experiences delivered in a nurturing, supportive environment. Working in professional learning groups teachers, with the support of instructional coaches, analyze curriculum resources to differentiate instruction in a way that ensures equitable and successful learning experiences for all learners. Across all core subjects, Lafayette aims to connect classroom learning with real world application. We teach the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) ELA curriculum, which was written by DCPS teachers, to help students build a love of reading and knowledge of the world through content-rich, text-based learning experiences. In mathematics, we use Eureka Math, a standards-aligned curriculum that equates mathematical concepts to stories, with the aim of developing conceptual understanding and real-world application. For science we use the research-based 5E lesson model, and the social studies curriculum uses standards-based content to empower students to become inquisitive, informed, and engaged members of society. In all subjects, teachers at Lafayette use a variety of instructional approaches to meet the needs of the diverse learners in our community. In some lessons, teachers use explicit instruction models to guide students to success and in others, students may be engaged in student-led inquiries to explore and debrief their learning on new topics. No matter the instructional strategy, we strive to encourage student ownership over learning and academic success by providing student exemplars for academic tasks, assisting students in the use of rubrics to self-assess work, and encouraging students to persevere through academic challenges.

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, our teachers and staff have worked tirelessly to adjust our core instruction to ever-changing circumstances. This included shifting our curriculum and instruction online, where students interacted with their virtual classroom, including live lessons and asynchronous assignments. When distance learning began, students began using online, interactive notebooks, that allowed teachers to view student work and provide feedback. Teachers in all grades began to supplement the district-created resources with the use of interactive websites during live instruction. With these tools, teachers presented engaging lessons to students that increase participation, and they can provide feedback to students in real time. In August of 2020, grade level teams worked with instructional leadership to reflect on the experiences of Spring 2020 and ensure that student-facing tools were the most effective and appropriate ways to check student understanding and academic progress at each grade level.

Similarly, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued to reflect on the best way to deliver synchronous academic instruction virtually. Students have received live learning in math, ELA, science, social studies, and special subjects. When students returned to distance learning in August, ELA and math instruction increased to ensure adequate instructional time in core subjects. One aspect of Lafayette's core instructional vision that has remained consistent during distance learning is the commitment to providing small group, differentiated instruction in all subjects. Teachers quickly learned how to implement virtual guided reading sessions for all stages of reading development to ensure student progress. Using e-books, virtual letter tiles, and other virtual visual supports, teachers have been able to effectively plan and implement small reading groups for all students. Similarly, in math, teachers leverage a variety of engagement strategies, virtual and physical manipulatives, and high-quality modeling, to lead small math groups to content mastery.

Students are assessed on their knowledge and skills frequently throughout the year to monitor progress. In ELA, assessments aim to understand student progress along the developmental continuum of reading, including foundational reading skills such as phonemic awareness and phonics, as well as text reading fluency and comprehension. In math, teachers use curricular assessments, standards-based assessments, and diagnostic tools to understand student mastery. Finally, throughout the units of study, students demonstrate their knowledge by completing aligned Required Curricular Tasks. These activities are project-based assignments that allow students to demonstrate knowledge through hands-on projects to emphasize real-world curricular applications.

During distance learning, it has been especially important to maintain a consistent assessment plan to allow

teachers to monitor student progress. Many of these assessments are completed on a virtual platform, making the transition to assessing in a virtual setting almost seamless. In primary grades, teachers adapted their assessment practices by meeting with students individually to complete text reading and foundational skills assessment in literacy. During grade level meetings and “Data Days” with instructional coaches, data from assessments is analyzed to identify broad trends in student understanding and individual student needs. From this analysis, teachers adjust and plan for upcoming units to include instruction in critical skills and develop individualized action plans for students who need support and acceleration.

As we transition yet again to welcome most of our students back to in-person learning for the fourth term we will continue to provide a high quality, differentiated education to all our learners.

**1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):**

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

At Lafayette we value early childhood education, and our well-regarded Pre-K program is in high demand. Using the research-based, developmentally appropriate Creative Curriculum as our starting point, we develop rich units of study with meaningful and authentic learning experiences that engage children’s curiosity and build confidence and skill.

Author studies, which continued throughout the pandemic, are a hallmark of Pre-K at Lafayette. As a culminating event, each class creates a discovery museum to celebrate an author and highlight children’s work with examples such as recipe books, character sketches, story maps, a grade-wide favorite character quilt, and student performances. Our students explore concepts of character, setting, problem, solution, and making predictions in our hybrid learning model. This year all Pre-K students joined a joyful celebration of author Mo Willems in our Virtual Elephant and Piggie Party, where we made puppets and our own “slop” from found materials at home.

We monitor our students’ progress with authentic assessments that allow children to be proud of their accomplishments and continue to grow. We use the GOLD assessment platform which enables us to document our observations and track students’ skill levels along a developmental continuum and ensure all children are ready for kindergarten and beyond.

The information we share with families through GOLD is only one way we build partnerships with families. During this difficult year we have worked to build a strong home and school connection with our Pre-K families. We have been in constant contact with our families and developed and delivered materials to each child to increase participation and learning. From finger puppets, name cards, and an ASL ABC chart, to journals and number poems, children and families have had the tools they need to keep learning fun and meaningful all year.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Lafayette is known for our robust “Specials” program that goes beyond traditional academics to teach, inspire, and grow the whole child. Our team of ten specialists works together across disciplines to create a program that provides students with innovative, differentiated learning in the arts, language, movement, literacy, and social emotional learning. In addition to weekly classes, our team offers a variety of fun and engaging enrichment programs. During the quarantine, our team provided a school-wide virtual Wellness Wednesday to offer extra wellness activities for our students isolated at home.

All students attend our unique weekly Peace of Mind Classes where they learn about mindfulness, social emotional skills, conflict resolution, neuroscience, and social justice. Through movement, reflection, role-playing, drawing, discussion, skits, music, and more students learn how to handle challenges they face as individuals, in their communities, and in the world. Students participate in enrichment programs such as Mindful Mentors, an alternative recess program called Peace Club, and a social justice club called SPARK.

This year mindfulness has helped our children cope with worries, fears, loneliness, and isolation brought on by the pandemic. The Peace of Mind Curriculum was created at Lafayette by our Peace Teacher and is now being used in schools across the country and internationally.

All students at Lafayette actively participate in our music and art programs using a variety of hands on and virtual platforms. We incorporate arts integration techniques to create greater engagement and depth of understanding in the general curriculum, celebrate diverse cultures, and learn to place art and music into an historical and cultural context. Music students listen to, evaluate, analyze, improvise, and learn to read music. Visual art students use the elements, principles, and media of the visual arts for personal expression and communication. Arts enrichment activities include participating in virtual concerts, choir, instrument instruction, Art Club, and a schoolwide digital Black History Quilt project. More than ever before, the arts have been critical to students' emotional and physical health during online learning.

At Lafayette we believe that physical education is essential to our students' education and creating lifelong movers. Our three P.E. teachers provide twice-weekly, standards-based lessons that develop teamwork, motor skills, physical fitness, sportsmanship, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence. As we have adapted to the ever-changing learning environment due to the pandemic, our students continue to be fully engaged both virtually and in person in physical education class.

All Lafayette students attend weekly Spanish classes. We emphasize Hispanic culture and traditions through year-round displays, movie nights, field trips, student country presentations, and Spanish and International Clubs where we learn about other cultures and perspectives from guest speakers.

In a typical year, all Lafayette students visit the Library regularly either for daily visits, open library, or class. In a weekly partnership with our reading specialists, struggling readers and English Language Learners are buddy readers for younger students. Lafayette's commitment to equity, accessibility and diversity is exhibited in our collection: multilingual, graphic novels, high-low and Own Voices selections are added annually. Classes are currently virtual, but we continue to celebrate reading, expose students to diverse stories, and curate resources for students, families, and staff.

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

Lafayette's commitment to holistic education means taking the widest lens possible in defining the meaning of academic support. Working in grade level teams, teachers and coaches analyze curriculum resources to differentiate instruction in a way that ensures equitable and successful learning experiences.

In response to standardized testing data from 2019, Lafayette implemented a strategic approach to address the needs of students of color and students with Individualized Education Plans. These subgroups were identified as having a significant achievement gap when compared to their peers. To that end, Lafayette began a 2-year partnership with Relay Partnership for Inclusive Schools. This strategic approach began with analyzing data and assessing the needs of the school, staff, and community. The academic leadership team meets monthly with Relay coaches to discuss ongoing strategies being implemented schoolwide. Coaches of the academic teams then share this knowledge with teachers and support them in implementing the strategies in their classrooms.

Teachers meet weekly to reflect on their practice, plan strategies for supporting students furthest from opportunity, and practice implementing structures for success in classrooms. Teachers use Culturally Responsive Scorecards to evaluate curriculum and discuss which material needs to be supplemented, removed, or amended to meet the needs of diverse learners. Teachers discuss research-based strategies to address student needs, plan lessons that are rigorous and joyful, and analyze student progress. Teachers also participated in professional development on ending curriculum violence and Courageous Conversations to equip staff with language and knowledge to support learners with diverse needs. These additions, in addition to our many other racial equity

initiatives, create another layer of support, ensuring all voices are being included in the school community.

In 2017 Lafayette was chosen by the District to open two self-contained special education classrooms for students with autism, severe learning disabilities, intellectual impairment, and multiple disabilities. Since then, we have expanded to four classrooms to meet the needs of our diverse learners. These classrooms, which serve the most vulnerable of our special education students, have been seamlessly integrated into our general education curriculum wherever possible, including specials, lunch, recess, and academics. Lafayette is the only school in the District to offer a full complement of special education programming for our self-contained classroom students from kindergarten through fifth grade allowing them to remain at Lafayette as they grow.

In addition to planning for instructional needs, Lafayette supports our students and families in need. School supplies and materials such as whiteboards, markers, and notebooks are provided to students for home use. Families are provided with WIFI routers, computers, iPads, grocery gift cards, Uber rides, furniture, and more to provide the support they need. Additionally, anything that has been documented on an IEP that would benefit the student and help them access the curriculum more effectively is provided. The mission at Lafayette is to eliminate as many barriers for students as possible, so that all students have access to a dynamic elementary education.

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

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

At Lafayette, our school rules are Speak Mindfully, Act Mindfully, and Move Mindfully. These guidelines remind us to bring kindness, compassion, and thoughtfulness to everything we do and to ensure that every child feels seen and nurtured as a whole person. Our arts integration model allows children to express themselves creatively across the whole curriculum. Our unique schoolwide Peace and Mindfulness program, activities to fit every child's interests, and a dedication to all our learners create a warm and caring school culture.

Lafayette is known for our wonderful community spirit. From our Dot Day celebration of creativity, our arts integrated "Informances" (Patriotic Celebration, Inventors Wax Museum, DC Theater Café, Battle of the Books, Poetry Slam) to our epic Field Day and Arts Nights, students are excited to share their learning and celebrate our school. Students can participate in Spelling Bee, Math Team, cooking and gardening classes, student council, recycling club, two social justice clubs (SPARK and Kaleidoscope Kids), become Mindful Mentors or Cub Facts reporters. Peace Club and Open Art Studio provide recess alternatives to those who may need them.

Kindness is a priority at Lafayette. Kindness Pals have continued throughout the pandemic to build community and create a habit of kindness. All our students learn and practice mindfulness which gives them needed tools to cope with the challenges of this pandemic year.

Although some of our Lafayette traditions have been put on hold this year, we have created new ones such as virtual KidConnect Clubs, virtual concerts and choirs, and Wellness Wednesday, where our community comes together virtually to celebrate our mental, emotional, and physical health with fun schoolwide activities.

Our SEL Committee supports teachers in building community during daily Morning Meetings. Throughout the pandemic and as we return to school in a hybrid mode our Mental Health Team (MHT) created social stories and skill builders for both parents and teachers to use with students to address various social emotional learning and wellness topics. Skill Builders have addressed anxiety, via a "worry warriors" series, executive functioning, lessons on managing big emotions, flexibility and sustaining focus, and a recent series "Strike a Pose," addressing nonverbal communication and the challenge of reading facial expressions while wearing a mask. MHT has also created parent-facing presentations that address coping with change, self-care, and parenting in the pandemic.

We want our students to feel respected, loved, and valued. Lafayette is a school that cares, and it shows in everything we do.

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

In recent years Lafayette has formed two important partnerships to help improve student achievement in our most vulnerable populations. First, a multi-year agreement with Relay Graduate School of Education has provided teacher training around inclusive practices and universal design for learning. This partnership targets improving instruction to our students with disabilities, though has provided valuable strategies for non-disabled students as well.

The second partnership Lafayette has engaged in over the past several years has been with Courageous Conversations, an organizational partnership for all-staff training on racial equity and anti-bias teaching practices. All staff have completed the Beyond Diversity training, a two-day seminar designed to help leaders, educators, and administrators understand the impact of race on student learning and investigate the role that racism plays in institutionalizing academic achievement disparities. This partnership targets improving instruction to our Black and African American students.

Engaging families is another top priority for Lafayette. Every family in our community participates in our Home School Association (HSA). We send out a weekly Tuesday Bulletin to all families with school updates, and teachers are required to send weekly classroom updates as well. We have also formed specific parent affinity groups for Spanish-speaking families and families of students of color. These groups meet monthly to discuss school updates and other areas of concern specific to these families. Several hundred parents attend our virtual “parent huddles” each week to receive timely updates related to school reopening and Covid procedures. Specific sessions with families who remained virtual have also taken place, to help bridge the divide between these groups.

During the pandemic, our two school counselors pivoted to providing more community outreach and support and made dozens of home visits to deliver technology, school supplies, food, clothing, and other basic materials. Since then, counselors have continued to check in weekly with vulnerable families. Because many families have moved, counselors have assisted with furniture and other needs as well. In total, more than 300 family outreach calls and home visits have been made since the Covid-related closure of schools during the current school year. School staff collaborated with the HSA to provide over 30 Covid-relief grants for emergency cash assistance to families in need.

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

Lafayette creates an environment where each teacher feels valued through a robust continuous professional development model that puts the teacher’s voice, choice, passions and learning at the center. Teachers' leadership skills are fostered through authentic engagement on self-selected, teacher-initiated committees and teams, such as the Social Emotional Learning Committee, the Racial Equity Committee, and the Academic Leadership Team. Teachers also play a key role on the Home School Association (HSA) and the Local School Advisory Committee (LSAT). These two committees ensure that teachers’ views are considered for all school-level decisions. Teachers’ active involvement in and leadership on schoolwide committees and teams were critical during the transition to virtual learning in 2020, and then, in the transition back to in-person learning in February 2021. Grade-level teaching teams took a lead role in selecting a re-opening model based on their deep understanding of their grade-level priorities including the developmental stage of their students and meeting the learning needs of the largest number of students.

Another important part of Lafayette's continuous professional development model is the support for teachers from instructional coaches through the LEAP (Learning Together to Advance Our Practice) model. The goal of LEAP is to support and engage teachers as experts in teaching the DCPS Common Core-aligned curriculum. Teachers engage in a weekly cycle of development in small content-specific professional learning communities led by content experts. Teachers receive one-on-one, growth-oriented feedback through one of three coaching touchpoints: Observation and 5P Debrief, Modeling and Debrief, and Co-planning. Grade-level LEAP meetings also include a strong focus on data for formative and continuous assessment. These data meetings have been critical to planning and communicating during virtual learning and the return to in-person learning. Instructional coaches recently presented mid-year data to the entire school community highlighting that our students performed at or above proficiency in reading and math at levels comparable to pre-Covid performance.

Finally, teacher excellence is recognized and rewarded at the city level and the school level. A Lafayette kindergarten teacher was recently named Teacher of the Year for Washington, DC, our Peace Teacher received a commendation from the State Board of Education, and many of our staff are invited to DC’s “Standing Ovation” ceremony for excellence. At the school level we regularly applaud and support our fellow staff members. Lafayette’s community of support, based on a shared respect for colleagues and passion for teaching and continuous learning, is palpable and makes Lafayette a truly wonderful work environment for every teacher on their own unique professional educational journey.

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

In 2020, before the pandemic, our Principal was awarded the Rubenstein Award for Highly Effective Leadership. This past year she has gone beyond any other in her dedication to our staff, our students, and our families. Planning what we hoped would be a temporary emergency shift to virtual learning, to opening

a school year completely virtual, to moving an entire school to a hybrid posture would be an achievement for any leader but with a school our size it has been a colossal undertaking. Working with a team of three Assistant Principals and four Instructional Coaches, our Principal has managed to make this challenging year as smooth as possible for our students and their families.

During the past year, leadership has been in constant contact with our school community through news flashes, parent huddles, and weekly staff meetings providing the reassurance needed during this stressful time. Leadership sought input from key stakeholders as plans to deliver instruction and support for our students changed throughout the year and worked with our LSAT, custodial staff, health staff and others to ensure our building was safe for our students to return. As we returned to a hybrid format in February, the Principal collaborated endlessly on schedules and procedures to make sure transitions and instruction occurred in the safest, most rigorous, and most joyful way possible. Currently, the Principal and APs are on the front lines each morning greeting students as they enter our building.

Over the past seven years our Principal has built and modeled a shared vision for an inclusive culture. She communicates and reinforces high expectations for all our learners as the collective responsibility of the entire community and ensures that exceptional learners are given the opportunity to achieve optimal academic success on grade level content. The Principal also ensures all staff receive the support, time, training, and resources needed to effectively support all students.

Lafayette's Instructional Coaches are a key part of our leadership team. Coaches check in with teachers and assist them in their planning and outreach to students including leading virtual LEAP team meetings and creating support plans for students and families who need them. In addition, they lead the work of gathering data necessary to inform instructional practices and drive student achievement. Coaches collaborate with school leadership on the comprehensive school plan and other instructional planning documents as we consider ways to make our school even more joyful and engaging for students and families.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

At Lafayette we believe that equity, cultural awareness, and respect must factor into everything we do as a school community. Four years ago, we created a Racial Equity Committee (REC) to help us focus our work on curriculum, community engagement, professional development and much more. This year REC launched a Black Lives Matter Year of Purpose to promote racial equity into every aspect of school life throughout the year. Through schoolwide read-alouds; lessons on diversity, stereotypes, and implicit bias; Black History displays; guest speakers; weekly schoolwide assemblies; virtual choir productions; schoolwide art activities and so much more, we have kept the messages of inclusion, equity, diversity, social justice, and the celebration of Blackness at the forefront of everything we do.

REC provides professional development on topics related to equity and provides an emergency response system to quickly address racial bias within or outside of our community. Monthly meetings for our Parents of Students of Color strengthen our community. She Reigns, our affinity group for girls of color, holds weekly meetings to engage in discussion and activities related to leadership and identity, as well as create inspiring and uplifting "informances" for our school community. Empowering Males of Color, our affinity group for boys, provides leadership and identity-based discussions as well as community-building opportunities for our boys.

REC works to diversify our curriculum and library resources to ensure that they reflect a diverse representation of all members of our community, including books written by diverse authors that present marginalized groups in a positive light and highlight the rich contributions of people of color throughout history. In SPARK Club students learn about issues affecting our community such as hunger, systemic racism, and historical injustices and create social justice advocacy and community service projects to address these problems. In art classes, students learn about using



the power of the arts to make change.

Here in Washington, DC we often have a front-row seat to current events. When events, such as the January 6th attack on the Capitol Building occur, we create reflective processing spaces for students and staff to allow for all feelings to be shared, offer self-care practices, and plan for action when necessary. Our students have processed the events of this year through living history art projects including a schoolwide digital art collaboration of “Brave Enough Quilts” inspired by Amanda Gorman’s “The Hill We Climb” to imagine a more just, kind, and peaceful world.

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

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Lafayette's strength is in our deep commitment to the social and emotional needs of our students. This has long been a foundation of the Lafayette philosophy and during this difficult year we have seen these long-term efforts pay off in many ways.

Closing our physical building during the pandemic meant constructing an entirely virtual online learning community ready to provide students with live instruction and social emotional support within days of our stay-at-home order. During the summer, our Social Emotional Learning (SEL) team launched an action plan to ensure that every student had a network of support in addition to live instruction with a teacher, and if needed, ongoing academic intervention, continued counseling, and special education services. Our counselors and social workers delivered computers and set up hot spots so that all students could maintain live instruction and close contact with teachers. We immediately implemented Morning Meeting in all classrooms, to continue our sense of community and to address the myriad social and emotional needs surfacing within our student body.

We created online clubs we call KidConnect to help our students find opportunities for fun and socializing with their peers. We created Wellness Wednesday Virtual Assemblies to provide wellness-related enrichment to all our students at home. And through our unique Peace of Mind Program, we continued to support our students with mindfulness skills to help them cope with the trauma of quarantine.

As we launched the 2020-2021 school year, our students' social-emotional well-being remained in the forefront of our planning. Our SEL team delivered professional development on implementing effective morning meetings and created social stories for teachers to share with students to help them adjust and cope with learning in a virtual environment. Throughout the pandemic our commitment to our students' well-being has been instrumental in sustaining our academic community and ensuring our students continue to feel safe, valued, and loved. Lafayette's Panorama Student Survey results from the Fall 2020 show a 14 percent increase in students reporting feeling loved. Moreover, compared to other elementary schools nationally, Lafayette is in the 80-99th percentile for students feeling a sense of belonging. As a result of our deep commitment to our students' social and emotional needs we are confident that they feel loved, cared for, and part of a community whether we are together in person or not.