

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 370 Dawson Forest Road West
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Dawsonville State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30534-6023

County Dawson County

Telephone (706) 216-5812 Fax (706) 216-0182

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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* Dr. Damon Gibbs E-mail dgibbs@dawson.k12.ga.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Dawson County School District Tel. (706) 265-3246

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Elaine Wilson
(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

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

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):
- 4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 7 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	0	0	0
K	26	21	47
1	28	33	61
2	38	31	69
3	31	21	52
4	19	28	47
5	23	32	55
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	165	166	331

*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):
- 1.2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 0.3 % Asian
 - 2.1 % Black or African American
 - 2.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 89.8 % White
 - 4.2 % 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: 5%

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

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	19
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	350
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

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

Spanish, Lithuanian

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
9 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 49 %

Total number students who qualify: 162

8. Students receiving special education services: 28 %
93 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>8</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>2</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>13</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>18</u> Developmental Delay | <u>13</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>43</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>2</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: 1
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.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	15
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	7

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.

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	96%	94%	95%	95%	94%
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.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
 Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

To provide quality instruction and student support that results in preparedness for college, career, and life.

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.

Over the summer, Dawson County gave parents the choice of whether they wanted their children to receive instruction in a traditional face-to-face or online format. Our doors opened for learning, as planned, on August 7 with over 80% participation at school. The district organized online students by grade level and provided a teacher. Every nine weeks, parents have the option to continue with online instruction or return face-to-face. Quarantined students require classroom teachers to provide virtual instruction and assignments to ensure students continue to receive quality learning experiences throughout the year.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

Riverview Elementary, part of the Dawson County School system, is perched on a hilltop high above the Etowah River in Dawsonville, Georgia. It is located in northeast Georgia, about fifty miles north of Atlanta at the base of the Appalachian Mountains. The flowing river, soaring mountain views, and surrounding forest provide the ideal setting for teaching and learning. We serve approximately 390 students in kindergarten through fifth grade in a small rural district with a median household income of \$66,281. We are a relatively small Title I school with a huge heart. Most grade levels support two classrooms. We are a center school for the district and have the privilege of hosting two classrooms of students with moderate to profound special needs.

Riverview opened its doors for learning in August 2010. We are currently celebrating our 10th anniversary. Our staff includes members at varying stages of their careers. One will find many staff members have served the students of Riverview since our inception, allowing for a very personal approach as staff members can create family connections as siblings progress through our school.

Riverview's mission is to provide quality instruction and student support that results in preparedness for college, career, and life. Two critical elements of our program that help achieve this goal are the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program and the use of Professional Learning Communities (PLC).

Driving into our school, approaching the entrance, one will see a large sign on our fence that reads, "BE THE SPARK," referencing our PBIS program. We are very proud of our program as it is the cornerstone of all we do. Students and staff conduct business with the expectation of behaviors that are exemplary of Service, Pride, Attitude, Respect, and Kindness (SPARK). It sets our tone, attitude, culture and is our heart and soul. Like many schools, we display our PBIS matrix proudly around the building. Students are provided direct, explicit instruction in behavioral expectations and recognized for adherence. However, our PBIS program is much more than matrices. It is our culture; it is woven into the fabric of our school. Students are sorted into houses when they start at Riverview, and they remain in that house throughout fifth grade. It becomes their family. We have theme days and house days. Students compete to earn SPARKs for good behavior and strive to outdo each other. We host elaborate SPARK assemblies where we have fun, play games, sing and dance as a community, and discuss good positive behavior. Our students learn and thrive in the culture we created under the guise of PBIS and SPARK. One can feel the culture and soul of a building as soon as they enter. All visitors entering our doors comment on our school's positive vibe, our children's politeness, and the warm, welcoming atmosphere we created. It is this atmosphere that allows our children to grow and thrive academically. Our students know we will challenge them, but we will love, care for and support their attempts.

Riverview developed a strong PLC network over the past ten years built on trust and a shared belief that our collective knowledge far outweighs that of any one individual. We created a master schedule to allow time for weekly PLC meetings. Our meetings are always focused on student data, whether formative, unit, or benchmark assessments. We follow structured protocols to remain student focused. Our teachers know there is a child behind every data point and that data speaks the truth about student success and opportunities for growth. They embrace these opportunities, alter their instruction, and work to ensure that learning occurs at high levels for all students. Our team participates in the districtwide creation of standards-based report cards. We currently have these in grades kindergarten through third grade. These standards serve as the guidepost for our meetings.

On March 13, 2020, our superintendent announced schools would be closed for two weeks to help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Little did we know students would not return to our building for the remainder of the year. Our students are fortunate in that Dawson County issues a school iPad to every student. We have a robust student learning management system that our teachers use throughout the day. While it was not an easy transition, teachers moved their teaching and student learning into an online platform. It took an adjustment period and a tremendous amount of work by our instructional team, but we successfully provided quality online instruction for our students. We were fortunate to have the structures in

place to make it all come together. As of March 2021, we are pleased that 87% of our students receive instruction in a traditional face-to-face format. Designated Dawson County teachers serve online students through a districtwide model.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

Riverview's core curriculum includes reading, English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies for kindergarten through fifth-grade students. Every student participates in art, music, and physical education on a three-day rotation and a daily remediation/enrichment segment. Grade levels follow district-created pacing guides in core content areas, collaboratively created by classroom teachers. The pacing guides include the Georgia Standards of Excellence. We embed student goal-setting into our curriculum, giving students ownership of their learning and lifts academic rigor. Goal setting is a collaborative effort between students, teachers, and parents.

Our literacy instructional model includes a balanced literacy approach in reading for all grades with explicit phonics instruction in grades K-2 and a writing workshop model. Balanced literacy includes instruction in phonics, vocabulary acquisition, fluency, and comprehension. Our guided reading model is based on an assess, decide, and guide framework. Teachers implement a writing workshop model to meet individual student needs through student conferences focusing on the craft of writing and integrated writing conventions.

A large part of our mathematics instructional approach is Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI). This approach builds on the student's number sense and problem-solving abilities. Students express a variety of methods to solve problems. The CGI model requires students to explain their thinking while noting the similarities and differences in other problem-solving strategies. In addition to CGI strategies, teachers use hands-on manipulatives to solidify concepts. Our mathematics curriculum has an integrated technology piece that allows students independent practice.

Science instruction includes hands-on activities and inquiry-based learning, while social studies include project-based learning and the use of graphic organizers. These subjects are also incorporated in our literacy instruction as non-fiction texts are part of the segment that builds background knowledge and vocabulary depth.

We adapted our curriculum, instruction, and assessment in various ways since the pandemic forced the doors to close from March to May 2020. Teachers and students transitioned overnight from a traditional brick-and-mortar classroom to the virtual world. With 1:1 devices, Riverview students took charge of their learning by navigating all content areas within our learning management system. To create equity, we provided hot-spots for students who did not have internet access through community partnerships. Additionally, when we returned in the fall, teachers arranged virtual field trips to allow students to experience the curriculum in authentic settings.

For the 2020-21 school year, Dawson County offered two options for student learning: virtual and face-to-face. Families who chose the virtual option were grouped with other grade-level students to create districtwide virtual classrooms. Fortunately, teachers were not required to serve students in a synchronous and asynchronous environment simultaneously. However, the main challenge for teachers in the building was with quarantined students. Given the number of positive cases throughout the building, students were continuously coming and going.

Instructional changes had to occur to meet the challenge. Teachers developed a plan to incorporate technology into face-to-face classroom instruction within the learning management system, making the transition seamless for quarantined students.

We administer common assessments in grades K-5. Kindergarten through third-grade assessments are administered online at the end of each unit and aligned to our districtwide standards-based report cards. In addition to classroom unit and formative assessments, we give quarterly summative evaluations in grades four and five. Standards-based report cards are currently in development for grades four and five. All students also participate in the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) benchmark assessment in the fall, winter, and spring. This assessment measures student growth and achievement. Data is analyzed over time

to note patterns of strengths and weaknesses. Results feed into an online program to develop an individualized learning pathway to remediate, enrich, and reinforce skill sets. Fortunately, we administer all common and benchmark assessments online, which allows students learning virtually to participate.

Teachers participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLC). They implement the Data Teams for Learning model (DT4L) to unpack state standards, analyze classroom and district assessment results, determine differentiated groups, and design instruction to meet the various groups' needs. Teachers will regroup and re-assess in a continuous model of improvement. However, given the current pandemic and social distancing requirements, teachers have to differentiate their instruction on a more individual basis.

The transition to online learning from March to May 2020 caused teachers to strengthen their instructional technology strategies and eventually produce more engaging lessons in the core content areas. In preparation for academic gaps, teachers participated in vertical and horizontal PLC meetings to adjust curriculum alignment and pacing guides. Virtual teachers implement the flipped classroom model, utilizing asynchronous and synchronous sessions with students with break-out rooms to differentiate instruction and assess using creative and innovative approaches.

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

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All students attending Riverview face-to-face participate in physical education, music, and art on a three-day rotation. These classes support students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge by creating engaging lessons focused on the Georgia Standards of Excellence. The physical education and fine arts teachers collaborate with grade-level teachers to ensure cross-curricular instruction. Student art displays beautifully decorate our hallways. Our students participate in a systemwide art show displaying their work. Our music students also participate in competitions yearly and have scored exemplary each year. Last year's art show and the music program performance moved to a virtual format. This year, virtual students will have an opportunity to participate in the art show.

Students in virtual learning also participate in physical education and fine arts classes daily. While students do not receive direct instruction in these classes, their daily schedule allows for work in the content areas. Teachers provide physical education and fine arts activities easily accomplished in their home environment.

Riverview is fortunate to have a media center with an extensive collection staffed by a certified media specialist and a connected technology lab. The media center is open daily for students to check out books when their schedule allows. The technology lab is available for use at the teacher's discretion. The media specialist hosts classes teaching students how to conduct research, use the maker space activities, and integrate technology into content areas. Teachers collaborate with the media specialist to schedule and plan these lessons.

COVID-19 budget cuts resulted in eliminating a technology paraprofessional who regularly met with students to provide technology-focused lessons. With our instructional technology coach's support, there is now a greater emphasis on classroom technology integration. A media center clerk position was also eliminated; however, we trained student leaders to assist the media specialist allowing maintaining a daily open schedule.

The counseling program provides individual and group counseling. In-class guidance lessons, created around our SPARK behavior expectations, are taught monthly to all students, emphasizing character education, self-awareness, and equitable behavior. These curriculum-based lessons align with American

School Counselor Association Mindsets and Behaviors for Student Success and Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning standards. Our counselor has made himself available to students and families struggling with emotions around the COVID-19 pandemic. Our learning management system allows for communication with students, allowing him to assist our virtual students. Before returning to face-to-face instruction, he arranged supervised virtual "hang-outs" to ensure students felt connected to the school and each other.

Other programs, including Pals Mentoring, Eagle Academy, and after-school enrichment clubs, adapted due to COVID-19. Our Pals Mentoring program, pairing at-risk students and staff members, moved to a virtual platform. Eagle Academy, our instructional extension for Tier 2 and 3 students, moved to a summer format. Many of our enrichment clubs, including Art, Marathon, Chorus, and Coffee Cart Crew, were forced to cancel. However, some clubs such as Sunrise News Team and the Yearbook were able to shift to a virtual format where students could participate from home.

3. Academic Supports:

As part of the multi-tiered support system (MTSS), interventions and assessments maximize student achievement and minimize behavior challenges. At Riverview, all students participate in daily differentiated instruction that enriches and remediates based on individual needs, meeting their social, emotional, and academic well-being. Three levels of intervention include Tier 1, differentiated research-based best practices for all, Tier 2, small group-targeted support, and Tier 3, intensive individualized support.

Teachers continually gather perception, performance, and academic data through classroom, district, and state assessments both formally and informally to create flexible student groups to meet their ongoing individualized areas of strengths and challenges. Through PLCs, the Data Teams for Learning process provides teachers the opportunity to unpack standards, build assessments, deliver research-based strategies to the classroom, and assess for student growth. The teachers work within their PLC to design and develop assessments and lessons and analyze data.

To narrow our identified achievement gaps in the performance of students who are economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities, Riverview focuses on student growth and behavior. Our School Improvement Plan has three primary goals: increasing the percentage of students showing growth in reading and math and reducing discipline referrals for all students. To accomplish these goals, we restructured our master schedule for optimal learning segments, provided professional learning in reading, rolled out social and emotional learning (SEL) standards, and continued the Data Teams for Learning process.

Riverview serves gifted students through a cluster model. Gifted and high achieving students participate in a multi-grade level enrichment segment for students in grades 2-5. Since COVID-19 restrictions have not allowed us to combine grades in one setting, homeroom teachers differentiate their instruction to provide enrichment daily.

An action step to increase student growth includes incorporating self-monitoring and goal setting as a more rigorous way to improve student achievement. Students are actively involved in their learning and can track their ongoing progress instead of waiting until a summative assessment in the spring. Parents and teachers collaborate about goal setting and support at home as well.

The restructured master schedule allows students performing below grade level to receive more effective instruction in special education or the Early Intervention Program (EIP). Students receive instruction on grade-level standards and individualized support for areas of deficit. Teachers focus on individual goals to bridge the gap utilizing research-based strategies and differentiation. Although the number of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students at Riverview

does not constitute a subgroup, we also include them in immersive language through inclusion and a pullout model.

To meet the needs of virtual special education, gifted, and ESOL students, lead teachers create digital service plans that outline the supports and scaffolds which students require to access the curriculum. Teachers connect with students and parents to offer additional support and conduct virtual Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings when needed. Lead teachers also provide support to the online teacher and progress-monitor through the learning management system.

Students with more significant social and emotional needs attend weekly counseling groups during the Response to Intervention (RTI) segment as part of the MTSS process. These groups model, teach, and practice empathy, self-regulation, self-monitoring, and personal goal setting. If students do not make progress with these interventions or present immediate social and emotional needs, more intensive interventions such as individual counseling, play therapy, and mentoring programs are available.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Visitors to Riverview comment on the positive atmosphere they experience inside our halls. This celebratory environment where students are rewarded for perseverance, acknowledged for accomplishments, and encouraged to do their best motivates students toward success and confidence in all areas of their lives. The positive behavior interventions and supports that are in place for all students create a supportive and exciting learning environment for all students and staff alike. We call this uplifting energy the Riverview SPARK. While it might seem effortless to the casual observer, it results from careful planning and hard work.

The SPARK Team, a PBIS team, composed of administrators, teachers, and parents, meets monthly to review PBIS data and discuss ways to improve and enrich our culture at Riverview. Along with this team, all stakeholders are encouraged to contribute tangibly to the SPARK through their words and actions.

Visual and auditory reminders make it impossible to ignore the SPARK when one enters Riverview. Seasonal displays in the foyer remind students as they arrive of the quarterly house challenges and service projects. Visitors will see elaborate holiday decorations framing our annual drive to raise support for charities in the winter. Houses competed in Penny Wars this year, and every morning the halls were filled with the sounds of pennies clanking into buckets and bells ringing in the hands of staff members dressed in colorful outfits, reminding everyone to show their SPARK.

Coming together to celebrate students' academic and civic accomplishments has always been crucial to Riverview's success. Before COVID-19, Riverview would hold regular assemblies where the whole school would gather to celebrate the results of service projects, success and perseverance in testing and academics, and excellence in behavior and following expectations. These celebrations included music, dancing, games, competitions, acknowledgment for outstanding students, and dressing up creatively. While COVID-19 has limited our ability to gather physically, we remain dedicated to celebrating achievements together. Our annual talent show went online, and the Facebook live video of students performing in their own homes was a huge success. It would not be Riverview without dancing and singing, though for now, we unite for these activities through technology such as Google Meets. This year, in place of our annual staff lip-sync performance that kicks off the school year, students worked to earn choreographed videos of staff members dancing. Students enjoyed watching the performances while remaining socially distanced in their classrooms.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Stakeholder engagement is crucial to a successful school. In recognition, stakeholders are encouraged to join the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and the School Governance Council (SGC). The SGC is an elected body composed of members representing parents, the business community, and staff members. Stakeholders offer feedback on creating and revising our School Improvement Plan, Parent Involvement Plan, and the School-Parent Compact. Throughout the pandemic, the PTO and SGC played a critical role in our success by offering feedback and gathering community support.

Our principal provides weekly communication to parents via email and phone messages. The communication reviews the week, outlines upcoming events, highlights various student or staff members, and provides tips for at-home practice. We found this crucial communication tool throughout the pandemic kept everyone up to date with the most current information.

Riverview uses parent data teams during conferences in the fall and spring to review curriculum, analyze student data, and discuss student progress. We provide parents additional resources to support learning at home, which supplements daily instruction at school and online. Other data shared includes the MAP Student Report giving parents a clear picture of how their child performs compared to others in the district and across the country.

Family-friendly events such as a lip-sync competition, bingo night, and student-led talent shows provide opportunities for families to join students and staff in fun celebrations of Riverview's culture. We invite community stakeholders to participate through guest appearances and donations. The PTO plans and organizes events such as the Monster Mash, a father-daughter dance, and a mother-son dodgeball tournament. Our PTO goes above and beyond preparing for these events, so students and family members feel welcomed and valued. Families are also encouraged to participate in events during the school day, such as Field Day, 100th Day of School Celebration, Veterans Day Ceremony, Book Fair Parade, and Flash Forward Friday. We hold a special grandparents' breakfast to celebrate and honor these essential family members.

COVID-19 changed our stakeholder involvement this year. Although our building is closed to parents and visitors, we recognize and value the home-school connection. To support this connection, we moved many of our events to a virtual format. For example, families are typically invited into school to review assessment data. This year, we turned this into a digital event in which over 140 families participated. Our participation rate this year was higher than we anticipated. While a difficult lesson to learn, COVID-19 taught us how to serve our community in innovative ways, resulting in a stronger connection.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The administrative team at Riverview believes that we hire the very best teachers and staff members. We trust in their ability to teach our students and know they are the key to our success. As a school, we have open conversations about teaching and learning and the best methods for attaining success. Our most important professional development occurs during our PLC meetings. It is here where teachers deconstruct standards, disaggregate data, and engage in rich discussions about teaching and learning. We created a culture of trust and openness to allow teachers the freedom to share ideas and thoughts about teaching and learning. They ask questions, seek knowledge, and work together to find ways to meet our students' needs. This job-embedded data-based approach has made a difference in the teaching and learning at our school.

In addition to our PLC meetings, we have structured professional development. We model our professional development after our expectations for good instruction, and we differentiate it to meet our staff's needs. Currently, we are conducting a book study on research-based reading instruction. After providing a general overview of the learning and expectation setting, we divided our staff into groups based on the learning that would support the students served. We did not move through the book as a group; instead, we tailored learning to meet the needs of the teachers and staff. Professional development is interactive and engaging for teachers. We show videos of new techniques so teachers can see them in action. We provide model lessons for teachers in their classrooms to see the new learning in action. The professional development provided comes with a calendar. Teachers know the lesson's learning target and their expectations for changes in their teaching when the learning is complete. The administrative team then follows up with classroom visits to guide and support the implementation. Professional development is based on our students' needs as determined by our Comprehensive Needs Assessment and School Improvement Plan. All teachers and staff have a voice in the creation of these plans.

In March 2020, we provided continuous professional development in response to the immediate transition to online learning. Professional learning continued in the fall as we returned to our building. Currently, we offer monthly specific training to our virtual teachers. They formed a PLC to collaborate, plan lessons, and learn about new innovative instructional strategies to be implemented in an online setting. Online teachers also participate in their respective grade level PLC to ensure alignment with their face-to-face colleagues.

4. School Leadership:

According to Robert Greenleaf, "Revolutionary ideas do not change institutions. People change them by taking the risks to serve and lead, and by the sustained painstaking care that institution-building requires." This quote embodies the spirit and philosophy of the leadership at Riverview. While there are school leaders, the faculty and staff provide the guidance and structure for the school. When Georgia first implemented the current accountability measures for schools, Riverview did not score well. We scored poorly. The teachers and staff did not dwell on the score or number reported; instead, we used it as a call to

action. We noted our areas for improvement and began the difficult work of revamping our instruction to meet our students' needs better. Since turning those first few disappointing accountability measures around, the faculty and staff continue to look for ways to improve teaching and learning.

Riverview's administrative team, composed of four instructional leaders, including the principal, assistant principal, counselor, and instructional technology coach, see themselves as servant leaders. They assist the teachers in looking at data and provide guidance and direction for the school. Then they roll up their sleeves and get to work with the teachers. They believe it is their responsibility to provide whatever the staff needs to meet the students' needs. They act as the fire to light the SPARK for the school and community.

The administrative team recognizes the value of working alongside our staff and dedicates their time to attend weekly PLC meetings. This time gives the administrative team the ability to build and sustain relationships while maintaining a student-centered focus. Recognizing the importance of this connection, the administrative team continued PLC meetings virtually when we transitioned to online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given the administrative team's servant leadership style, their roles changed minimally during the COVID-19 pandemic. They continued to act as servant leaders and serve their stakeholders' needs, adapting their work to support staff given the pandemic's demands. The administrative team met daily, monitored lesson plans, and observed virtual lessons to ensure instructional integrity. The instructional technology coach continued to provide technical support, device access, and online instructional strategies. She modeled and shared ways teachers could creatively reach their students. The counselor spent much time in virtual meetings with students, parents, and teachers to ensure social and emotional well-being. The principal and assistant principal filtered information from the district, state, and department of public health. They coordinated a safe and smooth transition from face-to-face learning to virtual learning and back to face to face.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Respect is one of the five core values emphasized in Riverview's SPARK. We expect students to show respect not only to adults and authority figures but also to each other. We teach mutual respect and consideration for individual differences to staff through professional development and students through PBIS, guidance, and SEL lessons. We reinforce expectations with our PBIS rewards program, regular school assemblies, and house meetings. The staff models and encourages respect for individual differences throughout the building.

Riverview serves a diverse population of students with intellectual and physical abilities, and students display love and respect in their interactions with each other despite their differences. Students excitedly share their sign language knowledge, which they learned to communicate with the growing deaf population at our school. At a recent field day event, a team of fifth-grade students included several students who used wheelchairs. Because of their efforts to involve these students in activities, they finished races slower than the other classes. The other students were not discouraged and excitedly cheered their friends louder than any other team. Except for one boy, who was crying after a football toss event. Assuming he was upset because his team lost, the counselor knelt to talk with him. Surprisingly, the boy said throwing the football reminded him of his friend, a student with Down Syndrome who had passed away. The two always threw the football together at recess. Seeing our students learn to love and respect those that are different is one of the most rewarding parts of Riverview. It is inspiring to see students grow in acceptance and understanding over the years. Lessons about respect and acceptance taught throughout the years result in students growing into leaders and advocates.

Given the current social and cultural events of the past year and recognizing the lack of racial and cultural diversity in our building, the administrative team opened the door to a conversation about

equity and inclusion. From these conversations, we decided our students needed to see diversity represented. A small step was the purchase of student texts that are rich in cultural and ethnic diversity. Our classroom libraries are now representative of the global society where we are preparing our students to enter.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice that has been the most instrumental in successfully educating and supporting students since the closures began in March 2020 is continuing our PLCs. When Dawson County switched to virtual learning on March 13th, the need to remain connected with one another was more significant than ever before. The administration knew teams needed to collaborate to ensure a continued focus on students, their learning, and emotional well-being.

Over the past several years, Riverview has worked to build robust PLCs. The staff values the time set aside to meet and discuss student data. Over time, the team has grown accustomed to sharing data and seeking support from their peers. Our PLC meetings are a time to ensure our instructional practices are sound. When we transitioned to virtual learning, our PLC meetings transitioned to a virtual format as well. The staff recognized this time is critical to student success. At the outset of virtual learning, the administrative team recognized teachers merely uploaded worksheets and activities for students and omitted teacher/student interaction. Teachers were not introducing new material effectively. Although online learning was only to last two weeks, the administrative team had the foresight to begin planning for a more extended period. With twelve weeks of instruction remaining, teachers needed to present new content and standards. As a team, teachers and administrators came together in their PLCs to review previously learned skills and tools, enabling teachers to fully interact with their students on a more rigorous and academically challenging level.

In August, when we returned to face-to-face instruction, we convened in PLCs again. Although we worked diligently to ensure student learning occurred at high levels, we knew twelve weeks of virtual learning would create gaps. PLCs worked to realign curriculum maps and pacing guides to make sure all students received appropriate instruction. Teachers continue to analyze student data and work samples throughout the year to close those gaps in learning and push student thinking.

The strength of our school lies in these PLC meetings. Teachers are comfortable sharing their data and asking for support. They recognize these meetings are not necessarily about their teaching but student learning. We are committed to ensuring all students will learn and they will learn at high levels. Our PLC process has not changed as we moved back and forth through online learning, the content of our meetings and the format in which they took place may have, but the focus on student success remained steadfast.