

U.S. Department of Education
2022 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Southeastern Academy
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 12251 NC Highway 41 North
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lumberton State NC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 28358-6892

County Robeson

Telephone (910) 738-7828 Fax (910) 671-8067

Web site/URL https://www.southeasternacademy.org E-mail kstone@southeasternacademy.org

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

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Kristen Stone E-mail kstone@southeasternacademy.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Southeastern Academy Charter School District Tel. (910) 738-7828

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Shelley Foil
(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.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

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 signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 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 2016 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 or 2021.
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. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s nomination and/or rescind a school’s award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. 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.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2021-2022) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for 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 in the school as of October 1, 2021 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	7	13	20
1	10	12	22
2	7	18	25
3	17	8	25
4	11	14	25
5	10	14	24
6	13	13	26
7	10	16	26
8	14	11	25
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	99	119	218

*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):
- 22 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 6 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 66 % White
 - 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 2020 - 2021 school year: 4%

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, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	5
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	8
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	218
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

none

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %

0 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 11 %

Total number students who qualify: 25

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 14 %
30 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 with an IEP or 504 should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>0</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>11</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>1</u> Developmental Delay | <u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>6</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: 8
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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	11
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	5
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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

Required Information	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	98%	96%	95%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2021.

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.

Southeastern Academy Charter School will maintain high expectations and promote excellence, especially in the fields of math and science for all students. The school, within its rural community, will foster a caring and creative learning environment. The school emphasizes the social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of each child. This will be obtained through learning experiences that help children reach their greatest potential in order to function as independent learners in a diverse and ever-changing society.

16. Provide a URL link to or text of the school’s nondiscrimination policy.

https://www.southeasternacademy.org/_files/ugd/07cf38_fd0872a0f5064f458b43731a9472a54e.pdf

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

Southeastern Academy enrollment is done through a lottery each year for the open seats available for the upcoming year. We use an automated system called Lotterease. Parents apply through the Lotterease account which is linked on our website. The application period runs from February through March. The lottery is held annually in April. On that day, the staff and a local official, not affiliated with the school, will be on campus to initiate the program online. The lottery initiation and subsequent results are open to the public on the day of the annual lottery in April. Lotterease will instantly notify the parent and/or guardian via phone text, or email, based on what they requested when they filled out the application online. After receiving the offer for enrollment, the parents are given 10 days to accept or decline their child's seat. When an opening becomes available, we utilize the waitlist on Lotterease.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Southeastern Academy (SeA) opened in August of 2013 as a K-8 school and serves 218 students. Our campus is located in rural Robeson County. We also serve students from surrounding counties, including Bladen, Cumberland and Robeson. It is the intent and policy of Southeastern Academy Charter School (SeA) to provide students a well-rounded education with an emphasis on mathematics and science. We prepare them intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically to take their places in life and in their community. Our goal is to prepare our students for the future in a society that values both higher education and high school graduates entering the workforce.

The school has done an outstanding job meeting that goal. You can see this through our students' performance on the North Carolina End of Grade State Tests. We have maintained a B or an A performance grade each year. Southeastern Academy also has Exceeded Growth (EOG) on its state achievement test, the EOG in 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2019. We met growth in 2016. Commendable student growth and achievement is a result of creative, multi-faceted approach to learning undertaken by students, parents, faculty, and school leadership.

SeA is committed to providing quality instruction to meet the intellectual needs of our students with supplemental extra-curricular activities. Core subjects of reading, math, science, and social studies are complemented by weekly resource classes including PE, Computers, Art, Library, Spanish, and Guidance. Students have the opportunity to experience field trips, a variety of cross-curricular assemblies and guest speakers, and extra curricular activities in STEAM to enhance our curriculum. Students often compete in academic and arts competitions. In the past eight years, SeA had representatives in Math Counts at our local university, The University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Junior Beta Club convention competitions, and the national Veterans of Foreign Wars essay writing competitions.

SeA's well-rounded approach to enhancing intellectual development in students includes focuses on social, emotional, and physical learning. As a resource class, students attend Guidance lessons using a targeted curriculum on anti-bullying and self-esteem. Teaching students how to navigate and manage their social relationships with peers, as well as learn more about their emotions, has driven our hiring, professional development, athletic programs, and planned extra-curricular activities. SeA is a community where students, teachers, and families work to create positive relationships by taking active steps. Teachers, students, and families may elect to have on-site social and emotional counseling. Learning activities that pair multiple age groups encourage positive relations among grade levels. Students also work in multi-age settings in school plays, wax museums, Junior Beta Club, Drama Club, and the Super Science Team. Physical development is emphasized at SeA through multiple Physical Education classes weekly in all grades. With emphasis on motor development, game skills, and participation in athletic teams, students choose to participate in recreational and competitive athletic settings. Based on annual interest, team sports include volleyball, soccer, bowling, and basketball coached by school staff and community volunteers. Taken together, the many social, emotional, and physical opportunities available to students have helped grow our school community into the "caring and creative learning environment" we set out to accomplish in our mission.

Southeastern Academy has implemented the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) as a whole school structure to provide intervention and enrichment support to students, not only academically, but also with attendance and behavior. Teachers work in K-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7/8 teams to address individual needs of students on a weekly basis. During this time, they analyze data from multiple sources, design interventions and enrichment activities, and discuss any changes needed to better meet student needs. Students whose needs are not met with core instruction models, nor interventions, are monitored closely to determine if there is the possibility of an unknown disability. Should a disability become suspect, the MTSS team refers that child to the Exceptional Children's Department for evaluation.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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

Southeastern Academy utilizes the North Carolina Standard Course of Study as their learning standards in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers will provide differentiated instruction and problem solving skills in their daily lessons. All disciplines will integrate a hands-on approach to the curriculum, as well as direct instruction, small group instruction, interactive technology based instruction, and independent study. When purchasing resources to support this goal, SeA has chosen to strategically choose programs that build through a vertical plan of instruction. For example, in the area of word acquisition we begin with Letterland and then utilize the Words Their Way program that begins in letter sounds and ends in multi-syllabic words with Greek and Latin affixes. Students then move into the Wordly Wise vocabulary program. By using this progression, students are placed into groups utilizing these resources at differentiated ages and stages. By providing a systematic approach to the curriculum, we are easily able to differentiate instruction for our students. We also use a master schedule each year to help with this process. Teachers in K-2, 3-4 and 5-6 teach the same subjects simultaneously, so if students are ahead or behind they can go to another room to get instruction that is needed for remediation or enrichment.

1b. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Southeastern Academy addresses English Language Arts Standards by following the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, and selects curriculum based on student data. Our elementary population focuses on a curriculum that follows the Continuum of Literacy learning (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). Our middle school population focuses on critical and higher order thinking strategies based on Bloom's Taxonomy. We firmly believe that all students at Southeastern Academy Charter School in combination with early scaffolding can be successful in English Language Arts. Every educator is committed to providing critical and targeted one-on-one intervention when students fall below SeA's performance goals. Parental involvement allows for a literacy rich learning environment. Interventions are put in place rapidly to address any educational achievement gaps. Through vertical planning, we are able to integrate reading strategies to address the needs of all students including but not limited to gifted and talented learners, struggling learners, and learners specifically identified with exceptional learning needs.

Southeastern Academy addresses English Language Arts standards by utilizing our data from formative and summative assessments to drive our instruction. Kindergarten through third grade students are assessed tri-annually on reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Fourth grade through eighth grade students are assessed quarterly through benchmarks and End of Grade assessments. All teachers use short formative assessments daily to monitor student reading growth.

1c. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

The mathematical curriculum at Southeastern Academy Charter School utilizes the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and the Standards for Mathematical Practices to guide and plan our math instruction for Kindergarten through eighth grade. At the beginning of each math class we use a starter question for spiral review. Our instructional techniques include hands-on manipulatives and activities to enhance instruction. We model mathematics using whole groups, small groups, and independent instruction. We promote higher order thinking skills in math by encouraging students to use reasoning and creativity when solving problems. A main focus of Southeastern Academy Charter School's mathematics department requires students to progress from interactive notebooks in the lower grades to student organized notebooks in upper level math courses to enhance their study skills which ensure that our students will be career and college ready. Other resources used in our classroom are Schoolnet assessments, Quizizz, Quizlet, Boom Cards, Stepping Stones, NC EOG Prep workbooks and Spiral Review. We also plan across the curriculum to

integrate math in other subject areas.

At Southeastern Academy Charter School we use peer tutoring across grade levels as a technique for intervention as well as acceleration. Southeastern Academy Charter School prides itself in providing accelerated instruction for students, this includes the high school Math I Course for our 8th graders. We use the data from North Carolina Check-Ins and I-Ready diagnostic and individual lessons to assess, differentiate, and reteach specific standards where students are not proficient.

1d. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Our science program provides opportunities to enhance and improve critical thinking skills in a constructive environment while promoting academic growth, content mastery, and collaborative learning. Scientific and social dimensions associated with climate change, water availability, and sustainable resources are systematically intertwined throughout the three fundamental branches of science (Life, Earth and Physical). Classroom teachers integrate a variety of teaching strategies. Examples include interactive notebooks, discipline specific vocabulary practice, hand-ons manipulatives, labs, technology based projects, and real-world field trip experiences. In addition, students participate in multiple research based socratic seminars and pair-share activities designed to strengthen cultural awareness and understanding through communication and experience.

Summative and formative assessments are frequently used to measure student performance and growth. Checkpoints, such as jumpstarts and quizzes, are incorporated into every science lesson providing immediate feedback on a daily basis. SchoolNet assessments, curriculum based projects, kinesthetic interactives, and quarterly benchmarks help identify student mastery by providing comprehensive feedback.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

At Southeastern Academy Charter School, we utilize the North Carolina Social Studies Standards Course of Study for grade level kindergarten through eighth grade. In all grade levels, we use resources that help to integrate reading curriculum into the Social Studies content. Our students are provided with a rigorous curriculum that is content driven. We provide our students with differentiated instructional learning experiences so that they may all be successful. This includes instructional resources such as Let's Find Out, Studies Weekly, CNN 10, and various others as needed to enhance student learning. These resources drive discussion based learning to help students become more civic minded and learn where they fit in to the community and the world they live in. Students are provided with various informational texts which allows them to learn how to analyze content. Students also learn skills on how to conduct research through project based learning and historical informational research writing.

Our formal and informal assessments help to drive our instruction within the classroom. The informal discussions held within our classroom lead the focus of the curriculum towards the interest of our students thereby driving their own interests towards discovery and engagement.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Southeastern Academy Charter School encourages the “social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development” of the whole child through supplemental instruction by resource teaching staff in the areas of guidance, information skills, technology, physical education, Spanish, and visual arts. Through a hybrid fixed and flexible schedule, students participate in 70 minute classes offered multiple days a week, along with additional one-on-one or small group classes in these areas. With staff dedicated to these areas of

instruction, students often work on traditional resource class curriculum outlined in North Carolina's Standard Course of Study in Digital Teaching & Learning, Physical Education, Healthful Living, and Visual Arts. Spanish classes aim to provide exposure to Spanish culture through language immersion songs, games, and explicit teaching found in Calico Spanish's online program. New to SeA this year, our guidance counselor utilizes whole group classes to support students using the Second Step guide to topics on Social Emotional Development within class settings. By providing whole class experiences in these topics, parents, teachers, and students collaborate on more traditional expectations of resource classes.

Outside of whole class activities, SeA's classroom teachers and resource staff provide remediation, counseling, extra-curricular, and in-class support to students. SeA offers an athletic program with teams for 5th to 8th graders in the sports of soccer, volleyball, basketball, and bowling. Extra-curricular clubs and competitions include chapters of the National Junior Beta Club, a local drama club, Super Science Club, participation in the North Carolina MathCounts Competition, Veterans of Foreign Wars Annual Citizenship Essay Contest, and the Young Writers Poetry Contest. Resource teachers utilize formative assessments, class observations, and teacher referrals to plan one-on-one remediation or guidance counseling sessions. In the last few years influenced by Covid teaching, one-on-one virtual meetings and extra-curricular activities have also provided much-needed support and connection for students working from home. By focusing on serving students in and out of the whole class setting, it is the collaborative goal of classroom teachers and resource teachers to build the child's sense of confidence in many areas and influence academic behaviors in a positive manner.

In addition to working in whole class settings and in smaller or individual settings, resource teachers and classroom teachers work at SeA to provide schoolwide learning opportunities and expositions. By collaborating on these schoolwide projects, parents and community members witness products of project-based learning in hallway bulletin boards, family fun events, and educational events. Past collaborations among teachers, students, parents, and resource teachers have included basketball free throw shoot outs; family cornhole tournaments; class survey displays; art shows; theatrical programs; biographical wax museums; book character dress up days and art projects; mixed-media holiday displays based on school wide art studies, and science fairs. While some of these events and activities have had to adjust to become virtual, SeA's staff displays these products via social media, virtual meetings, and the school website. By providing a variety of collaborative project-based learning activities, students learn to experience success in areas connected to academics that highlight their individual talents and lifelong passions whether they are athletic, artistic, digital, or social.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Before student success can be evaluated, the school must be structured to allow for all learning needs to not only be met, but challenged. Our school does this by starting at the foundation with scheduling as a priority. Teachers are given vertical planning time to collaborate with their teams, as well as additional time to evaluate student learning. This includes problem solving, small group interventions, remediation, social emotional support, and peer support.

Students performing below grade level are monitored in various mediums. Kindergarten through third grade are monitored through mClass data and are progress monitored as recommended through the Amplify platform. In addition, we use STAR Reading and the iReady math and reading diagnostic assessments, kindergarten through eighth grade. We use our Multi-Tiered System of Support to identify these students who are performing below the expected goal. Intervention groups are created based on common deficits. An example of this scenario would be when students struggling with phonemic awareness are grouped together. They are pulled for small groups in the classroom setting, but if warranted, they are also pulled during other noneducational minutes to help close their individual achievement gap. When expected growth is not made, we do refer the student for special education testing. Each educator is allocated time in addition to their planning to provide interventions not only for students who are below grade level, but also students who are performing above.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Similar to the aforementioned Multi-Tiered System of Support used to identify students who are below grade level, we use this method to identify students who are consistently outperforming their same aged peers. These students are often given additional responsibilities and assignments to challenge their thought processes and leadership skills such as Novel Studies and logic stations. We offer Math 1, a high school credit, for students who exceed state proficiency on their assessments as well as maintain an A in their seventh grade math class. We also partner these high learners with younger students in Buddy Reading and Buddy Math groups. Pre-pandemic, we offered enrichment groups that met weekly, per grade level, to challenge thinking and teamwork with divergent and high learners. This time is currently being used for social emotional learning, as our staff felt that this was a necessity after the emotional changes from living through a pandemic.

3c. Special education:

Special Education students make up 14% of the population. The schools Exceptional School Department consists of one full time teacher, one full time assistant, a contracted speech therapy company to provide speech services, and a contracted school psychologist to perform testing as needed. This team works together to manage IEPs, collaborate with regular education teachers to plan appropriate goals and instruction, and to communicate student progress with families. The Special Education Department selects highly effective, scientifically backed curriculums to address special learning needs. After a thorough evaluation with multiple assessments and sources, the team determines not only eligibility, but also curriculum and materials that work best for that individual learner. For example, we own Sonday System 1 and 2, Reading Mastery kindergarten through fifth grade, Number Worlds preschool through seventh grade, Reading A-Z, Words Their Way, and a number of online resources including iReady and Boddle Learning. With these programs, we not only use the built-in progress monitoring, but also conduct bi-weekly mastery checks for all special education learners to make sure they are making progress towards their IEP goals. We also use the general education data generated from state testing, such as NC Check-Ins, to make sure students are making progress towards grade level curriculum and closing the achievement gap.

3d. English Language Learners, if a special program or intervention is offered:

Currently, we do not have any students who are English Language Learners, migrant, or homeless. The school has money allocated in its yearly budget for students who meet the criteria for homeless. As for the ELL learners, if we should get a student who qualifies, we have two Spanish speaking teachers as well as a teacher who has taught ELL in the past. We would use these resources to provide any additional supports students would need.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Southeastern Academy Charter School goes above and beyond to create exceptionally positive environments for our students to feel inspired, pursue academic excellence, and grow together as one community. Teachers begin each year with bonding practices that are grown into peer to peer advisement and/or tutoring sessions as the year progresses. Each student benefits as they learn from one another and are able to assist each other with both personal and social growth. Students are encouraged to participate in social activities with their successes praised both in and outside of the classroom through our Beta Club. Allowing our students to share their outside community goals and successes in the classroom through their speech and writing allows other students to also obtain similar goals for community outreach.

Several ways were used to ensure that students at Southeastern Academy remained engaged throughout the recent pandemic. Teachers allowed students to continue their peer to peer connections during breakout sessions on Zoom. Each classroom acknowledged students efforts with classroom incentives such as Student of the Month and Leadership titles. Additionally, teachers met one on one with students to make sure that their emotional status was maintained, and through this, teachers were able to gather resources for students found to be at risk. Teachers reached out to parents and scheduled virtual conferences when necessary to bring in extra reinforcements for students who were struggling with the online learning experience, socially confined conditions, or otherwise emotionally challenged. With parents, teachers, and students maintaining the high expectations of Southeastern Academy Charter School, students came out of the recent pandemic with most if not all learning objectives mastered.

In the 2021-2022 school year, Southeastern Academy has been fortunate enough to hire our first ever guidance counselor to our staff. The counselor uses Second Step curriculum to meet with each classroom once a week. This curriculum focuses on social emotional learning and can be focused to meet needs identified by teachers throughout the year. Additionally, the counselor meets with students one on one, with parental guidance, who are struggling in various areas based on the requests of the student or teachers.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Southeastern Academy Charter School strongly focuses on building relationships not only among the students and staff, but also with the families and community. As a school we are committed to making sure that our families as well as the community are fully engaged in our schools decision-making, improvements, and successes no matter the size.

Our Administration has put a strong emphasis that effective communication is key, not only among one another but with our parents and our community. Our school utilizes many different resources in order to ensure that our families and community know the happenings at our school. Administration communicates to our parents through weekly emails, posts on our school's website, posts on our social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram), and through our calling system ONE CALL NOW. Some of the things that are communicated through the different platforms include important dates, school closings/inclement weather, upcoming events, and meetings. Through teacher chosen platforms for communication such as REMIND, Class Dojo, newsletters, classroom websites, and Class Tag, we are able to effectively communicate the happenings in our individual classrooms as well as school events to our families and community.

Southeastern Academy has a diverse collective of committees that are composed of parents, teachers, members of the community (bankers, business owners, etc.), and board members that help in decision-making, improvements, and celebration of school successes. Some of our committees include the Finance Committee which helps our administration make important decisions regarding the budget, monitor the budget, and ensure the school is in compliance. Our Policy Committee makes sure the school is in compliance with all of the policies that are set forth by the state. We also have a Vision Committee which works with the staff, parents, and members of the community to come up with the overall vision of the school and the direction in which we are going to move in. Our OPTS Committee's (Organization of Parents,

Teachers, and Students) main focus is to involve parents and businesses in the community with our fundraising for the school. SeA's Education Committee focuses on curriculum, disaggregating data, and composing plans on how to set goals and close achievement gaps.. Lastly, we have parents who graciously take time out of their busy schedules and volunteer at our school by helping teachers prepare for upcoming lessons by preparing materials, making copies, reading to the students, and sharing their career path with our students on Career Day.

Southeastern Academy Charter School partners with the University of North Carolina at Pembroke with their education department to help education majors get classroom experience through internships, student teaching, and observations. This partnership allows veteran educators to mentor future educators to get on the right path to becoming successful educators. Some of the things that we help the student teachers with are their state portfolios, lesson planning, transcript writing, small group instruction, and most importantly we give them experience of what a day in the classroom entails.

Overall Southeastern Academy Charter School strives to build positive working relationships with our staff, family, community, and industry partners to ensure that they have inclusion in important decision making regarding the happenings of the school.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Professional development opportunities are presented and encouraged throughout the entire school year so that all teachers can attain professional growth.

A variety of options are available to the staff with their own choosing based on their needs within the classroom and educational communities. Teachers plan and collaborate due to our Master Schedule with weekly planning sessions in team pods to cross curriculum and cross grade level plan. Teachers attend various conferences each year. These professional developments include National Gifted Conference, Middle School Conference, NC Math Conference, NC Reading Conference, National Science Conference, Social Studies State Conference, and online modules provided by the State in various areas. In addition, staff members attend a variety of professional development through the Bureau of Educational Research and the NC Exceptional Children Conference. With so many opportunities and support to teachers, provided by our administrator, teachers feel valued and respected, which has resulted in a staff turnover rate of only .04% annually.

Team pods were collaboratively challenged with the change to virtual learning during the pandemic. Administration quickly evaluated on hand resources and needs with teacher input, and came up with strategies to assist all teachers with their classroom needs and directives. More technologically advanced staff members led other staff members with instruction on Google Classroom, Zoom, scheduling, and media challenges. Throughout the pandemic, teachers continued to attend conferences virtually. Most recently, teachers completed a staff development based on the social and emotional needs in the aftermath of the pandemic to learn how to better help students readjust to a regular school year and identify students who are struggling.

4. School Leadership:

The foundation of Southeastern Academy Charter School's leadership philosophy is built on the premise of strong relationships. The principal at Southeastern Academy emphasizes the importance of building, nurturing, and maintaining strong relationships among all stakeholders including parents, students, teachers, staff, and the school board. Students have experienced an abundance of success during the principal's eight years of leadership due to her unwavering emphasis on positive relationships.

The principal has recruited a staff that shares her passion for teaching and learning, which is an integral part of our students' success. She maintains high expectations of staff members and provides the tools and opportunities needed to foster professional growth among the staff. School policies developed and passed by the board are carried out through her. Her opinions and decisions are respected by all parties because she has the best interests of the students at heart.

Through an open-door policy, the principal allows staff members to have a voice in decision-making, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and allowing teachers to feel valued as professionals with expertise vital to our learning community. Parents and community members feel comfortable voicing their concerns and opinions because she has nurtured these relationships over the years.

Most importantly, the Principal's high expectations and nurturing of relationships extends to our students at Southeastern Academy. She greets every student personally each morning as they arrive and is present throughout the school day in classrooms. She is genuinely interested in what students are learning and will often lend a hand in the classroom. She leads by example, and there is no task she considers too big or too small. In a previous school year, for example, a teacher received an unexpected medical diagnosis and had to terminate her employment. The principal stepped into that classroom as the teacher for several months until a well-qualified replacement was hired while continuing to perform her duties as administrator. She was not willing to risk the students' safety, emotional well-being, and academic achievement to quickly fill the position without due diligence.

As a small rural school, there is no assistant principal, school nurse, social worker, and up until this year, no guidance counselor. The principal has served these roles in every capacity at our school, even completing custodial duties as needed. Her positive attitude, strong work ethic, and attention to relationships are motivating and inspirational to students, staff, and parents.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Southeastern Academy Charter School has often been described by parents and teachers as a “family.” We have developed this reputation as a direct link to our school's mission to teach the whole child. In a school with one classroom per grade level, stakeholders have time and opportunity to get to know each other on a very deep level for nine years in Kindergarten through eighth grade. It is common for students and teachers to share their family and cultural backgrounds in class discussions, small groups, and one-on-one tutoring sessions. The strengths of these shared experiences inform novel study choices, teacher-created learning groups, and special learning experiences from projects to field trips. With the impact of COVID-19, these personal experiences have mattered even more. As students participated virtually, highlighting each student beyond academics has taken place through online awards ceremonies and non-academic sharing. Valuing the student as a person first meant that teachers hosted virtual Show and Tells or class meetings and held office hours to work with students one-on-one through challenges.

In many cross-curricular studies, a wide range of curriculum programs are used. For example, our EC teacher focuses on using a series called “Meaningful Conversations” from the RAZ Kids platform. These texts cover not only cultural differences, but also ability differences, different family makeups, living through hard times, and bullying. By choosing texts that act as “mirrors and windows,” our teachers enable students to discuss themselves and their relationships in our school to help become more collaborative and grow through challenges. Outside of this higher level resource, teachers select novel studies that provide this same experience in long term reading units. Fifth through eighth grade social studies instruction employs novel studies to teach historical events with discussion-rich projects giving students a chance to analyze events from a variety of perspectives and connect current and past events.

Southeastern Academy Charter recognizes the impact our vibrant community has on student achievement. Students at our school bring with them invaluable experiences from our local Native American community—the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. African-American students and board members have hosted annual meals where food culture is shared and memories are transmitted from one generation to the next through conversation. Teachers plan field trips that make use of the wonderful community resources in our region: MarineQuest, Fort Fisher Aquarium, Overnight with the Sharks at Ripley's Aquarium, ZipQuest, Morehead Planetarium, Carowinds, Discovery Place, Cumberland County's Water Treatment Facility, Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia, the Museum of Life and Science in Durham, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, and the Whiteville location of the North Carolina Science Museum. Faculty brings in educational experiences or in-house field trips to ignite interests and deepen classroom learning, including Shark & Squid Dissections, Dragonfly Detectives Citizen Science Program at Lake Waccamaw, Water

Quality Study, North Carolina Science Museum iLab Live - Belly Button Biodiversity and Dirt is Alive, Smithsonian LIVE with Dr David Hunt on Mummies, Bricks for Kids, Sign Language Author Kentrell Martin, and community guest speakers on career topics. This engaging environment values the interests, abilities, and experiences of our students, their families, teachers, and our school board. While working to create this inclusive learning environment, we have come to see each other as family while carrying out our mission.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The most instrumental educational strategy employed at Southeastern Academy to ensure student success is our use of data to drive instruction and pinpoint the individual academic and social-emotional needs of our students. Research shows that the sooner students receive necessary interventions or services, the better the long term outcomes tend to be. This approach has been integral in producing academically happy, confident, and successful students.

Southeastern Academy staff utilize a variety of formative and summative data to inform instruction such as DIBELS progress monitoring and assessment, Schoolnet Tests, NC Check-Ins, EOG scores, teacher-made tests, quizzes, exit tickets, and class work. Teachers and administration closely monitor student behavior and social-emotional well being through daily observation and interaction with students. Teachers maintain frequent communication with families of our students. Addressing social-emotional and behavior issues early is vital as it directly impacts student learning. Use of assessment, progress-monitoring, and behavioral data has allowed us to provide early interventions and support through the MTSS process leading to successful outcomes for all students.

Review of student data is frequent and focused across all grade levels. Teacher groups meet weekly to discuss current student data and specific strategies that can be used to target learning deficits or social-emotional needs as early as possible. Teachers meet monthly with administration to review grade level data and interventions. Teachers evaluate both academic data and behavioral data of struggling students using the MTSS process. The MTSS team leads this process at our school. Parents are an important part of this process and are included in the decision-making process for their child. Early implementation of the MTSS process has allowed us to identify students who need special services early in their academic career which has proven vital to their future success. Students who do not begin their schooling at Southeastern Academy immediately have their data from their prior schools disaggregated, are given additional assessments deemed appropriate, and given appropriate interventions upon entering our school.

The use of data driven instruction, at Southeastern Academy has addressed the whole child and played a vital role in the tremendous academic and social-emotional successes of our students.