

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 [] Charter [] Magnet [] Choice

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

Official School Name William J. McGinn Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1100 Roosevelt Avenue
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Scotch Plains State NJ Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 07076-2337

County Union

Telephone (908) 233-7950 Fax (908) 233-6766

Web site/URL https://www.spfk12.org/Domain/14 E-mail sslocum@spfk12.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Joan Mast E-mail jmast@spfk12.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public School District Tel. (908) 232-6161

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 Dr. Karen Kulikowski
(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 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):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	41	62	103
1	57	40	97
2	49	51	100
3	61	49	110
4	37	55	92
5	0	0	0
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	245	257	502

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 17.8 % Asian
 - 5.8 % Black or African American
 - 1.6 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 65.8 % White
 - 9 % 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: 2%

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

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

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	6
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	2
(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	465
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.02
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	2

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

Arabic, American Sign Language, Bengali, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Czech, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Kannada, Korean, Malayalam, Mandarin, Marathi, Patois, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tajik, Tamil, Telegu, Yiddish

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 12 %
62 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>9</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>14</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>8</u> Developmental Delay | <u>18</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>37</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 12
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.	25
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	12
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	18
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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%	97%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

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

To provide students the Foundation to Grow, the Compassion to Give, the Imagination to Dream. McGinn students are given the foundational skills to be independent learners who problem-solve together. Students develop compassion for others, a sense of belonging and responsibility, and enthusiasm for human diversity. McGinn students leave McGinn School with the creative tools and imagination to express themselves and follow their dreams.

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

<https://www.straussesmay.com/seportal/Public/DistrictPolicy.aspx?policyid=5750&id=b353e5f174554937a7b1e054bc178f6a>

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

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The McGinn School community is a beautiful, tree-lined suburb of New York City which serves two towns, Scotch Plains and Fanwood. Within walking distance of Fanwood’s downtown and the train station with north and south routes, the community is home to a diverse population of people from all over the world with careers in information technology (IT), the arts, business, education, and many more fields. Although less economically than culturally diverse, McGinn families and the community have jobs across the spectrum of the middle class and work both locally and in neighboring cities. Families move to the McGinn area for the schools and the family-focused amenities, with several parks, restaurants, and recreational facilities and opportunities for young people within walking distance.

Our school thrives off of our active community and from a close partnership among our families, our staff and the community at large. Our families expect a high quality, challenging education for their children. Our teachers and staff work as a team to deliver consistent and student-centered curricula, including Teachers’ College Reading and Writing Workshop and Everyday Math, where students take ownership of their learning and speak and write about their thinking. In Science and Social Studies, students explore real-world phenomena, such as the considerations of running a business and comparing what everyday routines look like in different parts of the world. Our standards-based report cards and rubrics make clear the expected skills and content knowledge at each grade level for every student. McGinn’s talented special education and supplemental support staff plan and teach with our general education staff to ensure learning tasks are differentiated to enable every student to attain proficiency.

Our students’ socio-emotional learning is integral to our mission at McGinn. Getting to know our students’ hearts helps their minds flourish. During the pandemic, we began a tradition, that has remained, of sending a McGinn Family Culture Survey to all of our families. From it, we have learned the countries our families are from, the languages we speak, our interests and talents, our everyday activities and the foods we buy, make, and enjoy to name a few of the glorious data we have collected. All staff have access to the data and use it to plan lessons and represent our students in our literature, lessons and conferences with students.

Our Student Assistance Specialist works with our staff and students to implement lessons and morning meetings that speak to the valued experiences of our learning community using curricula, such as Second Step and strategies from Responsive Classroom. McGinn holds many events to celebrate the strengths of our students and families to promote connections, such as McGinn Day of Global Cultures, Career Day, and McGinn Gallery Night. Our supportive and active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) enhances school events with more outside regular school hours, such as Super Science Saturday, our school community movie night, “Party on the Blacktop,” and our student Variety Show. A student-run McGinn Student Council with representatives from all of our grades, K-4, meets twice monthly to present ways they can improve McGinn to the principal.

McGinn has piloted robotics at the elementary level in our district by periodically applying for grants, seeking support from our community, and working with the PTA to establish a FIRST Lego League robotics team. We have a collection of Lego Mindstorms EV3 robots, Spheros, and Code & Go Robot Mice, which we use to teach programming and engineering concepts to our students in all grades. The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Educational Enrichment Foundation most recently supported Robotics nonfiction books for our library to further attract students to robotics. The Media Specialist and Principal work with teachers to deliver experiences in the library throughout the year and for Computer Science Education Week.

Our school worked day and night during the pandemic to develop virtual skills to last. The district trained Tech Coaches, who were located in each building. All of McGinn learned Google Suite and coached one another on how to maximize the educational benefits of Google Classroom to connect with students and families; share slides, spreadsheets, and documents for learning activities; organizational tools and assessments; and design, film. and post engaging instructional videos on YouTube for all content areas. Our district moved to a 1:1 device initiative, and our Tech Coaches assisted with professional development on using adapters for our document cameras and webcams. Teachers volunteered to hold staff Google Meets for trouble-shooting and introducing new content regarding our online platforms. McGinn held optional bi-

weekly staff meetings to discuss staff-initiated topics after school hours that were widely attended. When staff were absent from virtual school, colleagues supported students and substitutes with shared plans, slides ,and Google Classrooms. Teachers and paraprofessionals organized pickup and drop off times at the school for materials and assignments and often hand delivered them after school hours. Teamwork and collaboration led our McGinn Family through the pandemic.

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:

McGinn’s approach to core curriculum, instruction and assessment mirrors the focus of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools. We believe that each child is a unique and valued individual with varied abilities, aptitudes, interests, needs, and potential for growth. All students need: the knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively in our changing world, an understanding of themselves and of the world around them, strong feelings of self-worth and respect for others, a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment, and a supportive and stimulating learning environment. We strive for excellence at McGinn in realizing each student's potential for intellectual and personal growth in a diverse learning and living community.

The elementary program of studies is designed to assure the development of fundamental communication and computation skills to the highest degree possible for each child. Intrinsic to the program is the provision of sequential opportunities for the development of skills in the content areas of language arts, social studies, science, mathematics, fine arts, and world languages. The program also includes skill development aimed at helping children to mature physically, emotionally, and socially. Thus, the elementary curriculum aims to provide a broad and varied educational program in which the fundamental skills are embedded.

Assessment of student learning includes formative assessment that is integrated throughout the school day. Teachers monitor their students’ learning and use a variety of assessment tools to collect information about their students. In language arts, teachers use the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) to assess students' reading engagement, reading fluency, and comprehension. This assessment helps teachers match students with appropriate texts and identifies areas for differentiated instruction. Teachers also use the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) for Reading and Mathematics to measure student growth related to those content areas as well as to inform their instruction for the whole class and for small groups. Data from these sources are used to help teachers identify students who may need supplemental instruction and to help teachers plan instruction that best meets the needs of their students.

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

The K-4 language arts program in Scotch Plains-Fanwood is based on a balanced literacy approach, which integrates reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing; and is, therefore, aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. These elements are integrated through the use of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Units of Study in Reading and Writing (2015), Wilson's Foundations (2018), and Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling Instruction (2008).

The K-4 language arts literacy program supports a balanced and comprehensive approach to literacy through its use of the Teachers College Units of Study in Reading. Students consistently participate in both whole class (Shared Reading - grades K-2; and mini lessons) and small group (Guided Reading or Strategy Groups) instruction. Through Shared Reading, mini lessons and Interactive Read Alouds, students are introduced to key reading strategies and skills that help them utilize specific actions while they read. This opportunity occurs when teachers model the habits, skills, and strategies proficient readers use to understand and enjoy reading. During Guided Reading or Strategy Groups, students receive follow-up instruction targeted to specific developmental stages. The elementary reading program is designed to foster a love of reading and to develop the skills essential to students becoming effective, lifelong readers. The program provides opportunities for learning experiences in listening and speaking, phonemic awareness, phonics, word identification, word analysis, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension strategies. As students read a variety of selections, they learn appropriate strategies to optimize their comprehension. These strategies include previewing and predicting, confirming predictions, using prior or background knowledge, self-questioning, adjusting reading rate, using typographic clues, visualizing, rereading, and

using text features and illustrations to facilitate comprehension. As a result of students' focus on comprehension, students develop into readers who learn how to relate the text to themselves, the world, and other texts. They learn to be critical and active readers who know that reading equates with acquiring meaning from text. Students are offered multiple opportunities for practice and application of these essential skills. They may engage in independent and partner reading, while graphic organizers, retellings, and group discussions are also used to explore students' understanding of textual content and ideas. Further, written responses are used to encourage students' self-reflection and meta-cognition. Heinemann's Units of Study in Reading and selected trade books provide the basic materials to support the reading program in grades K-4. Students are exposed to a variety of genres to enrich their reading experiences. Teachers also work with the media specialist in the selection and use of additional appropriate print materials and technology to support the program.

The Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Units of Study in Writing provide students with genre-based, authentic writing instruction. The writing program relies on real literature to model writing and highlight techniques used by published authors in a workshop setting. Students are encouraged to see themselves as writers as they begin to develop the skills and knowledge required to be strong writers. Through writing both fiction and nonfiction, students are introduced to the important aspects of writing and deepen their understanding of the process as they continue through the program.

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

Mathematics learning in the primary grades in our district and at McGinn builds on the curiosity and enthusiasm of children and grows naturally from their experiences. Mathematical experiences challenge young children to explore ideas related to patterns, shapes, numbers, and space with increasing sophistication. Because young children develop a disposition for mathematics from their early experiences, opportunities for learning should be positive and supportive. The primary grades mathematics program encourages children to be actively involved in mathematics skills through measuring, observing, data handling, sorting, counting, and graphing. These experiences are linked to reading, language arts, science, and social studies. Activities develop a strong conceptual framework while encouraging and developing students' skills and their natural inclination to solve problems. Knowing how young children acquire skills, the curriculum supports their learning with the use of a wide variety of materials including: rulers, tape measures, geometry templates, money, and calculators. When appropriate, children also use pattern blocks, scales, and number blocks. Number activities oriented toward problem solving develop not only counting and number abilities but also such reasoning abilities as classifying and ordering. Activities encourage students' strategies and build on them as ways of developing more general ideas and systematic approaches.

McGinn students in grades K-2 explore mathematics using Everyday Mathematics developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. Teachers stimulate mathematical conversations each day through asking questions that lead students to clarifications, extensions, and enrichment activities. As students enter third grade, their prior experiences have shown them that mathematics is useful, practical, and important. Activities in grades three and four are designed to be interesting and understandable so that the students develop systematic understandings while maintaining their engagement and enthusiasm. Students use physical models to support and extend their thinking, and investigate real life situations to expand their problem-solving abilities.

In grades three and four, materials from the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project, Everyday Mathematics, are used as the primary source for classroom learning activities. Students work independently and in small groups to confirm their knowledge and to develop ideas through projects that extend over many days. On-going practice maintains and extends skills for using number facts and basic operations. Students' understanding of the base-ten number system is deepened as they come to understand its multiplicative structure. Equivalence is another central idea: students extend their use of equivalent forms of numbers as they develop new strategies for computing. They develop efficient and accurate methods (algorithms) for computing that are based on well-understood properties and number relationships. Students use algorithms as tools for solving problems and creating the different representations of numbers that are helpful for different purposes. Students' ability to recognize, create, and use equivalent representations of numbers and geometric objects also expands. In activities that connect with language arts, science, art, and social studies,

students develop and apply an understanding of geometry and spatial relationships. They explore data and use patterns and sequences. In grades three and four, calculators create opportunities to stimulate students' curiosity about the patterns and functions they may find in mathematics and other content areas.

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

The elementary science program in our district has been designed to provide all students with an exciting "minds on" experience which emphasizes higher-level thinking skills. Classroom activities involve students in the process of using an inquiry approach to science. An emphasis on experimentation, observation, and analysis sharpens students' critical-thinking and problem solving skills. Use of technology, including the Internet, and writing are integral parts of the students' science experience. In grades K-4, students explore the Full Option Science System (FOSS), which continues the balanced approach to physical science, earth science, life science, as well as engineering, technology, and the application of science. The grades K-4 science curriculum offers students challenging opportunities to practice science and build confidence in both individual and cooperative abilities. Our students maintain science journals in each grade, which document their observations and unique learning as young scientists.

Students investigate and explore the following topics in each grade level: kindergarten - Animals Two-by-Two, Trees and Weather, Materials, and Motion; first grade - Plants and Animals, Air and Weather, Sound, and Light; second grade - Insects and Plants, Pebbles, Sand, and Silt, Solids, and Liquids; third grade - Structures of Life, Water and Climate, Motion, and Matter; fourth grade - Structures of Life, Solids, Rocks, Landforms, and Energy.

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

The elementary social studies program is designed to provide students with foundational understandings of core social studies concepts in civics, history, geography, economics, and cultural diversity. Students explore who they are as individuals and how they function as members of various communities including the classroom, school, family, town, nation, and world. At each grade level, students also begin to develop an awareness of the wider world. The study of global cultures not only fosters an appreciation for diversity, but also promotes the perspective-taking that is critical for conflict resolution and democratic citizenship.

The social studies program assists children in acquiring essential knowledge of who they are within various communities, in appreciating their heritage, and in valuing responsible citizenship in a multicultural, democratic society. The K-2 social studies program utilizes a variety of resources to engage students in hands-on activities, including role-playing, group discussion, and problem solving. In kindergarten and second grade, the Social Studies Alive! program has been adopted as the core resource; and, in first grade, the Nystrom Exploring Where and Why program supports the focus on geography and community. Literature is the basis for many lessons, as fiction and nonfiction texts can illustrate important themes and concepts in engaging ways. In third grade, Social Studies Alive! has been adopted as students first begin a study of various aspects of the United States. Other resources, including children's literature and the Houghton Mifflin Social Studies textbook, Communities, support and enrich the district curriculum. In fourth grade, students also use Social Studies Alive! in conjunction with the States and Regions textbook published by Harcourt Brace. The materials are used to design a geographic study of the United States from a geographical, cultural and economic perspective.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our other curriculum areas include our specials classes, which district-wide provide students with opportunities to explore their strengths and interests through art, vocal and instrumental music, Spanish, media, and physical education and health. McGinn provides after school Homework and Spanish Clubs and the PTA-led Variety Show to promote performing arts.

Students in grades K-4 at McGinn attend art once per week. The grades K-4 art program is designed to provide children with the opportunity to create, build fine motor skills and background knowledge through the exploration of materials, and discover master artists. The art program provides a means of self-expression and an outlet for ideas, emotion, and creative energy. Students develop perceptual awareness and discrimination, fostering an appreciation of the power of art and its relation to the world around them. Art education introduces students to and builds upon the Elements and Principles of Art; color, line, shape, form, and texture.

The grades K-4 music program provides opportunities for students to develop skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes, and appreciation for their personal enjoyment, expression, and musical growth in contemporary society. The basic elements of music - rhythm, melody, harmony, form, tone color, dynamics, and tempo - are presented through various kinds of experiences involving singing, playing instruments, critical listening, movement, creative expression, and music reading. The music program consists of two major components: vocal and instrumental. Vocal music is offered to all children once per week in grades K-4. Fourth grade students have the opportunity to participate in a choir that meets weekly and performs throughout the year. The instrumental program is offered to children in fourth grade on an elective basis. Weekly lessons are approximately 40 minutes and reflect a wide range of instrumentation. Each school has a band that meets weekly when students are ready.

The elementary health and physical education (PE) program is a standards-based curriculum that brings focus to essential life skills, such as foundational motor development, which allows the learner to develop movements that are key to a healthy and active lifestyle. These movement-based lessons support both physical and cognitive development.

Social-Emotional Learning integration serves as the bedrock of our curriculum implementation and design. Learners in grades K-4 are offered lessons that begin with social-based warmups and opportunities to learn life skills, such as teamwork, cooperation, and taking controlled risks to support understanding of the experiential learning cycle. Recognition of dietary choices through the Go, Slow, and Whoa program helps students develop healthy food choices and habits.

The elementary world languages program begins with the study of Spanish in second grade and continues in sequence in grades three and four. This early introduction is designed to take advantage of the natural language learning ability and interest of the young learner. The early beginning provides for a longer sequence of practice and experience with the language, ultimately leading to greater fluency and effectiveness in the language studied. In addition, the earlier children study another language, the better their native-like pronunciation will be. Through the study of a world language at the elementary level, students also have a formal avenue in which to learn about and experience cultural diversity in the rapidly changing world. Twice each week our language specialist, who is a native speaker of Spanish, provides direct instruction in Spanish for 40 minutes. Students engage in communicative games, language experience activities, cultural fantasies, songs, rhymes, children's literature, physical activity, manipulation of props, role plays, dialogues, small group work, paired work, and listening activities. Students are assessed on the basis of their efforts in comprehending and speaking the Spanish language.

The media/library program at McGinn promotes student-learning and growth through interaction with fiction and nonfiction texts, a focus on research skills, an emphasis on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and exploration with robotics. Students in grades K-4 visit the media center at least once per week, with first-grade classes visiting twice. Through the use of specially selected databases, students learn to be active learners who seek answers, dissect information and apply this information. All first-grade students, and some in kindergarten, have additional ICE classes (Integrated Curriculum Experience) which focus on SEL, including units on pride, determination, friendship, and perseverance. Through our robotics program, students engage in new languages as they build and problem solve.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Our district offers several Tier 2 programs to support students who are identified with reading, writing, and/or math difficulties who have not responded to Tier 1 instruction. Tier 2 support can be small group pull-out (homogeneous small-group instruction with teacher-student ratios of 1:4 or 1:5) or push-in the classroom setting. In the push-in, students receive more attention and guidance in a classroom setting as they learn and practice using a multitude of strategies and mnemonics to assist their learning. The Students Obtaining Success (SOS) Program provides support instruction in reading, writing, and/or mathematics for elementary students. A team of teachers and administrators reviews data from multiple assessments to identify students in need of additional academic support in order to make progress in meeting state standards. In addition to schoolwide data collection, additional data used to identify students at risk are the Phonological Awareness Test 2, Oral Reading Fluency Assessment (AIMSWEB) and for first graders, The Reading Recovery Observation Survey Assessment and Slosson Word Test. Support instruction is designed in response to students' identified needs and provided through a push-in model and small group pull-out sessions. Instruction provides additional opportunities to practice skills, strategies, and review skills. Additional interventions are available for students in primary grades. Students who need support with reading and writing may be selected to participate in the Reading Recovery (First grade) or the Literacy Group Program (First and second grades). The Reading Recovery program is an early intervention designed to support first grade students who need an extra boost to help them become successful readers and writers. Students work one-on-one with a trained Reading Recovery teacher for 30 minutes daily for up to 20 weeks in order to learn specific strategies to make accelerated progress in reading and writing. The Literacy Group Program offers the same type of reading and writing support found in Reading Recovery but for a group of students. Students meet three to four times a week for small group instruction in reading and writing, utilizing the training, knowledge, and expertise of the Reading Recovery teachers. Additional literacy support instruction includes Orton Gillingham and Wilson multisensory instruction. Several teachers at McGinn are certified Orton Gillingham, Wilson, and Reading Recovery Instructors. The Tier 2 intervention programs have flexible entry and exit points in order for individuals to be accommodated. These interventions are proactive, intentional, formal, and flexible. The goal of these programs is to maximize student academic potential and build confidence and success for students.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

Students performing above grade level have their academic needs addressed through in-class differentiated instruction as well as specialized instruction in specific grade levels. Enrichment classes are offered in third and fourth grades, which include a mathematics enrichment program and a writing enrichment program. McGinn also offers a gifted and talented program called QUEST (Question, Understand, Explore, Seek, and Think) in fourth grade. The goals of the QUEST program are to develop students' conceptual understanding of real-world themes, issues, and problems; provide advanced opportunities for students to think and problem solve; enhance students' creative thinking skills and encourage innovation; develop students' metacognitive skills to foster independence and self-directed learning; develop students' social skills through positive peer relationships and social interactions; and, engage students in individual and cooperative learning environments where they have the opportunity to clarify and negotiate their thinking with others.

3c. Special education:

Students who do not make sufficient progress toward our trimester benchmarks and have been provided tiered intervention services, such as SOS and Reading Recovery, may qualify for special education services. Teachers, other staff members and family members can initiate the process through our Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Team. When students are brought to the I&RS team, we review progress of the student with the interventions that have been tried and set at least one measurable goal to address key areas to close the gap between the student's performance and expectations within a certain timeframe. If students do not meet the goal(s), the I&RS team can refer the student to the Child Study Team (CST). Parents and guardians can also request a CST evaluation for their child at any time.

If students receive an Individualized Education Program (IEP), McGinn works with the family to provide a program tailored to the student. We provide consultation services, paraprofessional support, in class and pull-out replacement resource classes in Reading, Language Arts and Math, and a self-contained, full-day special education program. We tailor plans by analyzing where and how students learn best. For example, we have students who are in our self-contained program with paraprofessional support who attend special classes (Art, Music, etc.) and lunch and recess with their peers in general education. We also have students with in-class resource classes for one subject and pull-out replacement classes for others. Our related services team (Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Speech) provide therapies in the general and special education settings.

Special education teachers at McGinn work with their co-teachers in the general education classrooms to maximize teacher-student ratios. They employ co-teaching techniques, including One Teach, One Observe, One Teach, One Assist, Alternative Teaching, Station Teaching, Team Teaching, and Parallel Teaching. Our resource room teachers prepare students in a small group to take risks to advance their learning, which builds their confidence for the general education setting.

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

More than one-third of McGinn students speak languages other than English at home, but those who qualify as English Language Learners have chosen not to receive additional services. Should this change, an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher would meet with the students daily for a class period to support completion of learning assignments and assess needs.

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

Our school district provides supports for students who do not have a residence. McGinn does not have students in this category at this time.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Students inspired our staff during the pandemic. Our dedicated teachers and paraprofessionals worked harder than ever before to learn technology and put together virtual learning plans that would connect and interest our students and make them feel secure and loved. Teachers and students expressed themselves through creative videos on their school-issued devices. They uploaded them to Seesaw, FlipGrid, and YouTube to present content, as an assessment tool, and to spread warmth and kindness. Students attended their synchronous classes regularly, because teachers worked together with district supervisors to create consistent, entertaining, and content-rich Google Slides lessons. Teachers and families communicated daily with each other to make sure they were well and to ensure their students were maintaining a school connection. Teachers shared names of students of particular concern to the principal and nurse who followed up with individual video chats and extra support during virtual class time. Lego robot kits went home to fourth graders for two week intervals, so they could build, film, and meet as a group to share videos of their creations. Teachers and staff visited students from a distance outside or in car parades to celebrate student birthdays, deliver supplies and support students who had suffered unimaginably.

Students have thrived being together once again in person. McGinn School has been in person the entire 2021-22 school year. At the beginning of the pandemic, our district administration, teachers, and staff met to prioritize instruction in the virtual realm. The result was inclusion of socio-emotional learning built into the daily schedule to address our students' and staff's need for emotional connection. Morning Meeting became a part of every student's day, where student interests, daily experiences, and familial and cultural backgrounds connected the students on screen. Our district counselors worked with our supervisors to develop socio-emotional learning lessons for teachers to implement according to the needs of our students. This change to an interconnection between academic and socio-emotional growth has improved the academic success of our students and will remain a regular component of our academic schedule.

How has it improved students' performance? When this school year started, students at every grade level exhibited academic gaps in addition to gaps in expected social behaviors we had never seen to this magnitude. The continuation and enhancement of our socio-emotional learning lessons paired with our outstanding teachers and staff, support of our Student Assistance Counselor, and a new SEL online curriculum, Second Step, available for teacher use, have propelled most of our students to grade level expectations at the end of the second trimester. Even our students who are farthest behind have begun to make strides both academically and socially. While we continue to see areas of academic and socio-emotional need for our students as a result of our COVID measures, we are bolstered by our students' resilience this year.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our school is successful because of our close relationship with McGinn families and our community. Our parents are actively involved in their children's education and communicate often with our teachers and the principal. Parents volunteer in our Media Center; support our classes as room parents; participate in school events as presenters (McGinn Day of Global Cultures, Career Day, Mystery Readers), organizers, and attendees; and provide programming for our school through our Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Events, such as Party on the Blacktop, Breakfast with Flame (our dragon mascot), Super Science Saturday, Family Skate Night, Bingo Night, the Variety Show, and assemblies are examples of the PTA's commitment to our students and families. Our PTA regularly celebrates our staff with breakfasts, luncheons, gift certificates for teachers to purchase additional classroom materials, and surprises at our Book Fairs. The mutual respect and collaboration between our PTA and staff contributes to our school environment.

McGinn has developed a close partnership with Kean University to mentor new teachers and continue our professional development. Through New Jersey's Building Teacher Leader Capacity Grant in 2016, Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools partnered with Plainfield Public Schools and Kean University to develop mentor teachers to be trainers of mentors in an effort to increase retention of strong new teachers. Since the

original grant, McGinn teachers, who made up the largest cohort of Mentor Teacher Leaders, have worked closely with Kean to welcome student interns and teachers into their classrooms. Some of McGinn's mentors have become adjunct professors at Kean, furthering their professional development and enriching the experiences of both the Kean and McGinn students in our classrooms who have resumed their in-person clinical practicums this year.

Other community organizations who support our success at McGinn include the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Educational Enrichment Foundation (EEF). We have received several technological grants, including the most recent on Robotics nonfiction literature. The REAL Parents of Scotch Plain-Fanwood, which promotes diverse literature in schools by donating books, has inspired our students during Read Across America Week by reading their donated books to our students in the Media Center. McGinn has also partnered with Social Justice Matters in Scotch Plains to develop Juneteenth lesson plans for our elementary students throughout the pandemic. High school groups, including the Black Student Union and Junior Achievement Heroes, have come to McGinn to read and discuss diverse literature and teach about developing businesses respectively.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

McGinn staff model professionalism with their focus on children and their well-being. We also value one another as greater than colleagues. We care about one another's families and welfare, which is how and why we weathered the most challenging parts of the pandemic without losing staff to attrition. We were there for one another.

Our teachers and staff are highly educated with large percentages holding multiple advanced degrees. This makes them an impeccable source for professional development (PD). Our district enables "Flex PD" to enrich our collective knowledge and differentiate for teachers' and staff's interests. McGinn staff and teachers throughout the district offer courses outside of work hours focused on curriculum topics, such as "Guided Reading Strategies and Strategy Groups in K-5" and "Monitoring and Sharing Student Progress with Families in Google Sheets." Teachers also offer self-care PD, such as "Embody Wellness: Start Where You Are," "Women's Self-Defense," and "Watercolor Painting." The opportunities to design our own PD paths is supportive and enriching, but was also draining during the pandemic. To support our staff during remote and hybrid instruction, providing time to work and discuss together was the greatest gift we could offer.

Our district scheduled four-hour synchronous mornings including specials for remote learning with an 80 minute lunch break. A one-hour period of synchronous instruction in the afternoon rotated teachers to provide additional planning time. At McGinn, optional staff meetings were scheduled twice weekly to provide spaces for staff to problem-solve, raise issues, and be together with people who understood what they were feeling. Teachers and staff provided on-the-spot virtual PD as needed when a colleague asked for help. Tech coaches at our McGinn worked around the clock to keep our teachers on a path for learning. The collegiality of our PD during the pandemic was unparalleled.

Our in person "typical" structure for PD includes three scheduled days built into all teachers' schedules where district initiatives and mandatory training takes place. McGinn's School Improvement Panel (SCIP) analyzes teacher evaluation data to set school goals for PD. Our SCIP also celebrates teachers and education specialists through the New Jersey Governor's Educator of the Year Award program, which since the pandemic has garnered more nominations from the McGinn community than ever before (more than double pre-pandemic nominations)!

To support teachers and staff's emotional well-being, McGinn has planned breakfasts, lunches and get-togethers, both virtual and in person. Our nurse, PE teacher, and School Assistance Specialist have worked together to spread kind notes and gifts to staff and to start a Spread Kindness initiative where for one week, students hunted for hidden messages of kindness and could choose to post them on a kindness bulletin board or give them to a friend. The PTA has hosted several drop-off and in-person staff appreciation events, such as drinks and snacks (all individually sealed for the pandemic) and breakfasts and lunches during in person school years.

Despite the challenges, teachers have moved reading and writing workshop from the pilot to implementation stage through the pandemic. This year they have implemented the updated Everyday Math curriculum by working as grade level teams to transfer resources from our supervisor into innovative and engaging lessons in the classroom.

4. School Leadership:

McGinn works as a team to support our students. All of our staff are experts at what they do and effectively contribute to decision-making. We have leadership structures in place to support this. The principal is the only administrative position at McGinn School; nonetheless, she is reinforced by a collaborative administrative district-wide staff and superintendent, informed by the district's Strategic Plan, and an impeccable school instructional and support staff who implement the philosophy of the school.

The principal's role is to ensure that all teachers and staff have what they need in physical and emotional resources to provide the highest-quality instruction possible to our students. McGinn School has a School Nurse, Student Assistance Specialist (SAS - School Counselor), and Child Study Team Member (CST - School Psychologist) who interact daily to prioritize student needs. This team visits classrooms and communicates with teachers and families daily to support students in order that they feel cared for and ready to learn. During the pandemic, this leadership team has been essential to expeditiously connecting students to services needed, whether academic or socio-emotional. The I&RS Team and CST evaluation process are the vehicle by which teachers and this leadership team are able to brainstorm effective supports with families and provide school-based services and interventions. McGinn's I&RS team consists of the classroom teacher and family of the student being discussed, a special education teacher, an SOS (Support Our Schools) teacher, a specials teacher, the school nurse, the SAS, the CST, and the principal. The CST team is comprised of the parents, a general education teacher, a special education teacher, the CST (social worker, psychologist and learning consultant) and any other relevant related services professionals.

Staff meetings are twice monthly at McGinn. One is dedicated to team or department planning and the other covers educational topics and school information. At team meetings, teachers analyze and compare data by grade level teams to measure progress on their two Student Growth Objectives (SGOs), smart goals they develop at the beginning of the year to track individual student progress in particular areas of need and/or strength. Teachers are encouraged to initiate topics of discussion, present best practices and work together during staff meetings. Most school decisions are made collaboratively and based on the shared documents we create.

Our administrative assistants work with the principal to communicate our actions with the PTA and our school community. The PTA president meets monthly with the principal to set agendas for our PTA meetings, learn about and contribute to our school initiatives and plan the weekly PTA eblast communication. Teachers are represented at our PTA meetings, which are open to our community. In this forum, parents generate ideas and share plans for upcoming student-focused events. Part of the meeting is reserved for questions for the principal. Committees, including our SCIP, Health and Wellness, Garden, and School Climate committees inform our school decision-making.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Ensuring each of our McGinn community members feels welcome, respected, and celebrated for who they are in all aspects of our students' learning weaves through everything we do at McGinn. We strive to demonstrate through our actions our district's statement of belief about diversity, equity and inclusion (abbreviated here): We believe that all students have a right to learn in equitable and inclusive classrooms that foster a sense of belonging. Equitable and inclusive classrooms are places where each student's identity is affirmed through the physical environment, interactions and relationships among students and teachers, the curriculum, resources and materials, and methods of instruction. In creating and fostering equitable and inclusive classrooms, we recognize that social, cultural and historical factors influence the extent to which specific student identities have been made invisible, have been disparaged, or have been denied. As such, equity demands that a concerted effort must be made to incorporate explicit instruction on topics that recognize and affirm the identities and experiences of marginalized people.

The district's Statement of Belief focuses McGinn's goals on Identity (self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities); Diversity (expression of comfort and joy with human diversity, use of accurate language and forming deep connections); Justice (recognizing and understanding the pain of unfairness); and, Action (demonstrating empowerment and action against prejudice and/or discrimination).

McGinn students explore the concepts of Identity, Diversity, Justice, and Action throughout our grades K-4 curriculum and learning activities. For example, beginning in kindergarten, students' study of communities begins with the family, where they compare families around the world to their own through literature and sharing their own family experiences. By second grade, students explore local and global communities and how people live by comparing diverse photographs and exploring both the external and internal traits of their own identities: what people can see and who we are inside.

Through our Units of Study in Reading and Writing, students both learn about social justice advocates and the issues they represent. Students take action by writing opinion pieces to effect change in their own worlds. Our students learn about civic engagement and taking action to improve McGinn through our Student Council, on which sit representatives from every grade level K-4 voted for by their peers.

Diversity and equity are celebrated through our McGinn Family Culture Survey data, which is shared on announcements and used to inform lessons. Our PTA develops a McGinn Global Cultures website highlighting artifacts, pictures and stories from all McGinn families who share their experiences with us. McGinn Day of Global Cultures brings family and community members into our school to share perspectives in individual classes on cultures from all over the world. We strive each year to expand our understanding and appreciation of culture with new presentations each year, such as life experiences of people who are deaf in the United States.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The number one strength of McGinn School is that our staff view our students as a family. Every decision and action we take at McGinn is based on how we would want our family members to be engaged in learning. If a child needs additional academic or emotional support, classroom teachers communicate with supplemental teachers, prior year teachers, specialists who interact with the student, the counselor, the school nurse, the family and anyone else who can help. We find a way to provide the resources each child needs. We dress up as storybook characters and our school mascot, Flame, to foster joy in learning. We make connections between daily lessons and authentic experiences, such as planting, tending and learning in our McGinn gardens. We celebrate our students' identities and families by providing opportunities for discussion and projects within our classrooms. The histories and experiences of our students and families become the fabric of our shared culture and McGinn family.

For our students, being a member of the McGinn family is not something that lasts only from kindergarten through 4th grade. McGinn graduates are welcomed back in a variety of ways, including as siblings to current students, gardeners in the McGinn gardens, volunteers at PTA-sponsored events, musicians in the Middle School Band performances, Junior Achievement presenters, Senior High School Project participants planning on teaching as a career, Robotics' experts for our Week of Code, and guest readers and speakers in classrooms to name a few. Our current students witness first hand the possibilities they, too, will have in their near future.

The McGinn staff take great pride in modeling care, respect and empathy for one another so that our students are immersed in a safe and trusting environment. We are a united family, in times of prosperity and of challenge, as proven time and again as our world and school community experienced the worldwide pandemic, troubling social times, and war. Our McGinn family raised funds for our sick and financially struggling families, drove needed supplies, such as groceries and toiletries to families, and visited students who displayed effects of isolation. Families support one another. Families do not let their members fall. Families offer stability and security even among chaos, and never was this more apparent than throughout the past two years and moving forward. The McGinn Staff believes that supporting and caring for students, families and one another is how we provide the foundation for students to grow, instill the compassion to give, and foster the imagination to dream.