

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 Mr. Josh Burris
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

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

School Mailing Address 1000 Dave Gibson Boulevard
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Fort Mill State SC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 29708-6416

County York County

Telephone (803) 548-8250 Fax (803) 548-8373

Web site/URL https://www.fortmillschools.org/ghes E-mail burrisj@fortmillschools.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. James N. Epps Jr. E-mail eppsc@fortmillschools.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name York 04 - Fort Mill School District Tel. (803) 548-2527

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Mrs. Kristy Spears
(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):
- 11 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 6 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 20 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	69	73	142
1	85	78	163
2	81	77	158
3	78	74	152
4	62	69	131
5	75	66	141
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	450	437	887

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0.1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 26.9 % Asian
 - 12.4 % Black or African American
 - 10.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 42.4 % White
 - 7.8 % 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: 6%

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	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	37
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	54
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	836
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
- Albanian, Bengali, Cambodian, Croatian, Gujarati, Hindi, Igbo, Kannada, Korean, Malayalam, Mandarin, Nepali, Other, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Chin

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 22 %
197 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 12 %

Total number students who qualify: 110

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 9 %
83 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>11</u> Autism | <u>2</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>29</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay | <u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>15</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>2</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 4
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	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	43
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	18
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	16
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	8

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

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

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 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. 2007

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

At Gold Hill, we connect by working together, grow through teaching and learning, and choose kindness by helping others.

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

https://www.fortmillschools.org/about_us/non-_discrimination_statement

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

Every morning, students at Gold Hill Elementary School (GHES) have an opportunity to recite our school mission as a part of the student-led news program. This may not seem too uncommon, surely there are many schools using a similar practice. However, for one to attempt to understand the nature and context of the GHES community, it is essential to understand its purpose. This mission is not a sophisticated, bombastic declaration of all the things the teachers and adults are going to do for the students inside the walls of the school. Rather, it is an invitation into a rather special community, and further, a reflection of the character of the school community itself as a whole. It is, at Gold Hill, we connect by working together, grow through teaching and learning, and choose kindness by helping others. We are a community of 887 students and around 100 staff team members. Our community represents different skills, passions, cultures, parts of the world, countries, states, skin tones, experiences, family structures, ethnicities, and speaks 23 different languages. What we are becoming (our vision) is a community where everyone is valued, supported, and inspired to grow. Our character, or essence, might be most appropriately captured within one small response on our student survey, given in our state every year. It says, Students from different backgrounds get along well at my school. At GHES, 97.7% of students agreed with that statement. Couldn't the world use a little bit more of people from different backgrounds getting along well with each other? GHES is a place of belonging, for everyone. We meet students, and people, where they are; then work together to help them gain forward momentum as learners who grow.

Through our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) instructional program, we provide a strong foundation of core instruction, as well as opportunities for intervention and enrichment. Differentiated instruction occurs at the classroom level in the areas of mathematics, reading, writing, science, and social studies. The workshop model is utilized to deliver instruction, which includes whole group direct instruction, small group guided instruction and activities, and independent practice. Teachers use student assessment data to meet the learning needs of all and target specific standards and skills. Students in need of intervention are provided additional learning opportunities at the classroom level in small groups and/or individually at the tier 2 level. Additional intervention occurs at the tier 3 level through support provided by our Reading Recovery teacher, and Reading and Math Interventionists. Our Gifted and Talented program serves students in grades 3-5 who are identified using assessment data based on state level criteria. Other support staff and services provided at GHES include Special Education Resource, Special Settings classes, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Mental Health Therapy, Behavioral Therapy, and English as a Second Language (ESO)..

Our schedule includes built-in time for morning meetings in every classroom to build a strong classroom culture that supports students socially and emotionally. Our House system incorporates all students and staff. From House names, colors, competition, leaders (students and staff) and chants, everyone belongs in a House. Students are recognized for exhibiting positive behavior and character through STING tickets, House points, Caught You At Your Best office referrals, and special growth recognitions. Staff can encourage each other through Shout Outs and Hornet Hero of the month nominations. Students are provided various leadership opportunities under the premise of, 'If a child can do it, let them do it.' Students run the morning news program, from recording, script writing, photographing, to anchoring. Students deliver and clean up breakfast, serve during morning arrival with the Helping Hornets, and assist with the Green Team recycling group.

The challenges brought on by the pandemic were certainly unique, but also provided us an opportunity to demonstrate resilience and reveal our character. Not only did we effectively assimilate over 300 new students into our community, but also had half of our school learning virtually while the other half continued face-to-face during the 2020-21 school year. We remained committed to collaboration and to each other, and thus made the most of our opportunities and circumstances.

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:

At Gold Hill Elementary we believe that we are better together. Our Professional Learning Community (PLC) is at the heart of all that we do. The mission and vision of our PLC at GHES is to engage in effective collaboration around the four guiding questions, to ensure high levels of learning and growth for all students. The four guiding questions of a PLC include,

What do we expect students to learn?

How do we know they are learning it?

How do we respond when they don't learn?

How do we respond when they've already learned?

In order to plan for instruction and best support our students, we hold PLC meetings weekly. Through these, not only are we able to collaborate at high levels by planning for instruction together, and review data collectively as a team, we are also able to use our academic specialists to support teachers through modeling and coaching. Each week, we come together with a specific academic focus- English language arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies. Teams begin by reviewing their team norms/commitments that they developed together. We then move through an agenda that targets one or more of the four guiding questions. One week we might be analyzing a pre-assessment as a team to form flexible groups within the "math workshop", another week we may be analyzing the most recent universal screening data, like a "STAR" assessment. Through this work we are able to identify not just student strengths and needs, but teacher instructional needs as well. Data is at the forefront of all our decisions, but we also want to ensure that teachers have the tools and training they need to be able to successfully deliver the content, so again, there is a strong element of coaching involved in our PLC meetings as well.

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

GHES follows the South Carolina College-and Career-Readiness Standards (SCCCR) for Literacy instruction along with the implementation of Units of Study for Reading and Writing (UOS) Workshop Model, FUNdations phonics instruction for grades K-2, and Words Their Way (WTW) for grades 3-5. This cohesive curriculum allows for a shared conversation with grades K-5 vertical teaching and learning. UOS, FUNdations and WTW support students as they develop across the grade levels using systematic learning progressions. The workshop model asks students to first develop their engagement with reading and writing as they learn to apply concepts and skills through a progressive, spiraling curriculum. Through the collaborative process in our Literacy PLCs, we use the teaching points and sequencing from the UOS, our priority standards, supplemental resources, and the expertise of our teachers to develop mini lessons which reach all students.

Our Literacy block is composed of a reading, writing, and phonics block. The mini-lesson contains: a connection, teaching point, guided practice, independent practice, and sharing. Students read from self-selected fiction and nonfiction texts during independent reading, and electronically read from Epic (digital library), Raz-Kids, and/or Freckle. Students use electronic devices for Typing Agent and Book Creator for writing. These programs include individualized learning paths, teacher directed assignments, and access to data dashboards to monitor progress.

Informal running records, anecdotal notes, Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark, UOS Reading/Writing Assessments and STAR data drive teacher-led small group instruction and individual student conferring.

Universal Screener Data from STAR, a nationally normed comprehensive assessment, drives our initial data dive to identify students performing below the 25th percentile. Our Student Support Team collaborates to determine intervention to support these students through the MTSS Framework. STAR provides information on proficiency and also growth to determine if students are making expected progress. Data is analyzed frequently during team collaborations. Each grade has a daily, designated WIN (What I Need) Time where students receive the review, reteach, and enrichment they need. Summative Assessments, such as SC READY (College-and-Career-Ready Assessments), are used as a way to certify learning and check for student mastery. Summative assessments help us prepare for how best to support students moving forward, including implementing/revising learning plans, student placement, and summer learning opportunities.

Our school has prioritized time within the Master Schedule for a 120-minute literacy block and an additional 20 minutes of WIN Time for differentiated supports. We have taken a closer look at the SC Literacy Priority and Support Learning Standards to revise our UOS Reading and Writing common assessments. Our Literacy Committee meets bi-monthly for grades K-5 vertical collaboration. Technology plays a vital role in our Tier 1 curriculum using SeeSaw for grades K-1 and Google Classroom for grades 2-5. By using these platforms, we are able to post classwork digitally for students/parents to access at home. All of the Literacy content through UOS has online, interactive, and Remote Teaching options and several of our assessments have been converted into Google Forms. GHES's core literacy curriculum, instruction, and assessment set our students up to become lifelong readers and writers!

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

GHES adheres to the South Carolina College-and-Career Ready (SCCCR) Standards for Mathematics, along with the implementation of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH) Into Math, for cohesiveness with grades K-5 vertical teaching and learning. HMH supports students as they develop their conceptual understanding and grow into procedurally fluent mathematicians. The learning model asks students to first develop their reasoning before connecting their understanding to concepts/skills. Through the collaborative process in our Math PLCs, we use the teaching points and sequencing from HMH, our standards/unpacking documents, supplemental resources, and the expertise of our teachers to develop clear, rigorous, and coherent plans for our mathematicians.

Our math instructional block is composed of four components; a mini-lesson, guided practice, independent practice, and Math Workshop. Math Workshop includes "Math with Myself" for independent practice, "Math with Someone" for current/spiral review games and project-based learning (PBL), and "Math with Technology" for digital support using DreamBox, Freckle, SplashMath, and Reflex. These programs include individualized learning paths, teacher directed assignments, and access to data dashboards to monitor progress. Formative data is collected and analyzed to drive the teacher-led small group instruction during Math Workshop.

Universal Screener Data from STAR, a nationally normed comprehensive assessment, drives our initial data dive to identify students performing below the 25th percentile. Our Student Support Team collaborates to determine intervention plans to support these students through the MTSS Framework. Throughout the school year, teachers are working on student growth by identifying misconceptions and learning gaps using formatives such as observations, exit tickets, and quizzes. Common Assessments are given within each module and STAR is given every four to six weeks. STAR provides information on proficiency and also growth to determine if students are making expected progress. Data is analyzed frequently during team collaborations. Each grade has a daily, designated WIN (What I Need) Time where students receive the review, reteach, and enrichment they need. Summative Assessments, such as SC READY, are used as a way to certify learning and check for student mastery. Summatives help us prepare for how best to support students moving forward, including implementing/revising learning plans, student placement, and summer learning opportunities.

GHES has prioritized time within the Master Schedule for a 60-minute math block and additional 20 minutes of WIN Time for differentiated supports. We have taken a closer look at the SC Math Priority and Support Learning Standards to revise our long-range plans to vary emphasis on standards that are deemed essential and supporting. Our Math Committee, which includes teachers from each grade level and Special

Education, meets bi-monthly for grades K-5 vertical collaboration. Technology plays a vital role in our Tier 1 curriculum using SeeSaw for grades K-1 and Google Classroom for grades 2-5. By using these platforms, we are able to post classwork digitally for students/parents to access at home (paper copies are provided for students without device access). All of the math content through HMH has online, interactive, and Remote Teaching options and several of our assessments have been converted into Google Forms. GHES's math core curriculum, instruction, and assessment set our mathematicians up for success!

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

At Gold Hill Elementary School, we believe that science instruction is best taught through an inquiry-based approach. As we plan for science instruction during our weekly PLC meetings, we plan in a way that will provide students with opportunities to investigate a problem, search for possible solutions, make observations, ask questions, test out ideas, think creatively, and use their intuition. We believe students learn best when science involves students doing science where they have opportunities to explore possible solutions, develop explanations for the phenomena under investigation, elaborate on concepts and processes, and evaluate or assess their understanding in light of available evidence. This approach to teaching relies on teachers recognizing the importance of presenting problems to students that will challenge their current conceptual understandings, so they are forced to reconcile anomalous thinking and construct new understandings. Through our work in PLC meetings, as we plan for instruction we are able to work together to determine what these problems/phenomena might look like.

Through our partnership with Discovery Education, we believe that students also learn best when the “5 C’s” are incorporated into lessons regularly. The “5 Cs” represent collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, communication, and caring. As we plan our science lessons, not only do we focus on the essential standards and investigations, we intentionally embed the “5 Cs” as well. One example might include, if the students are engaged in an experiment, we might plan for opportunities for them to “collaborate” through “turn and talks,” and for them to be “creative” by choosing how they want to present their data/findings with the class. We also believe that bringing in those “real world connections” and “careers” is key in helping students see the significance of what they are doing in the classroom and how it applies to the real world.

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

At Gold Hill Elementary School, we believe in putting the “social” back into social studies. As we meet in our PLC meetings to plan for instruction in social studies, our focus is to present the curriculum in a way that multiple perspectives are infused into a seamless narrative as historical events are presented without bias and with authentic voices. We believe social studies should NOT be taught through timelines, names, and memorized facts. Rather, social studies should be taught through enduring themes and questions that humans have struggled with over time. Our goal is for students to gain appreciation and empathy as they learn history through a variety of voices in a safe, collaborative learning environment.

We believe that social studies instruction is most meaningful when students recognize the importance and relevance of the knowledge and skills they are acquiring; and, when instruction develops the skills they will use later in life as 21st century citizens. With the standards in hand, we sit down to plan our instruction. We spend a great deal of time brainstorming how we can bring these topics “to life” for students and help them gain the understanding of how historical events of the past are relevant to them today; and, how they, themselves, can impact their world as well.

As far as instructional strategies, some of the tools we use to meet the unique needs of our diverse learners include, but aren't limited to, virtual/in-person field trips, Discovery Education tools including problem-based learning, and Discovery Education interactive digital techbook, among others! We also believe that incorporating reading and writing into Social Studies is crucial, so you will often see students writing, reading and creating throughout their work as historians. Teachers will also use story-telling and a wide variety of literature within their instruction as well.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our master schedule is set so that every class goes through a seven-day related arts rotation that includes Music, Art, Technology, STEAM, Guidance, Physical Education (PE), and Media. These other curriculum areas strengthen our school's academic program overall. Students are exposed to a variety of topics and have opportunities to acquire a lifelong love of learning through various skills, activities, and technology. Our related arts teachers are intentional in seeking opportunities to connect their content and lessons with what students are learning in the regular classroom as well. This integration supports students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge, and ability to apply their learning.

Pre-pandemic, our music teacher spearheaded the GHES Chorus program. Students in grades 3-5 were able to participate in the choir, practicing after school, and performing at local events. During the pandemic, the music teacher incorporated bucket drumming and ukulele instruction to provide performance experiences at outside venues for our students.

This year, our physical education teachers facilitated Jump Rope for Heart, raising over \$10,000 for the American Heart Association. The engagement with this program was increased because students go to PE classes twice within their Related Arts weekly rotation. Therefore, they were kept abreast of the fundraiser's progress, and excitement was maintained.

The media specialist and school counselors rotate between grade levels every four weeks. While Kindergarten, 2nd, and 4th grade students go to media, 1st, 3rd, and 5th graders go to Guidance class. Within the media center, students have the opportunity to check out books, work on research projects, participate in curriculum that has been aligned with what the classroom teacher has planned, and be creative with Maker Space.

We have also offered a Robotics team, which is led by our technology teachers. Students in grades 4-5 go through an application and audition process in order to make the team. The robotics program supports critical thinking, communication, creativity and collaborative skills, which coincide with the 5 C's that the district focuses on via the STEAM initiative.

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

Gold Hill Elementary School (GHES) administers STAR Reading and Math assessments as a Universal Screener to determine which students require support beyond Tier I or Core Instruction. Analysis of core instruction is ongoing based on STAR and common formative assessment performance. Teachers engage in reflective conversations to discuss student performance based on the state learning standards within each grade level.

Additional data collection is initiated when any child performs at or below the 25th percentile. This includes the initiation of Tier 2 evidence-based intervention with ongoing adjustments by the classroom teacher with corresponding progress monitoring.

If ongoing student assessments do not depict a desired rate of improvement (ROI), students may receive Tier 3 or intensive intervention in a group of no larger than three students with one of the school's academic interventionists. This is not used as a replacement for Tier 1 or Tier 2 instruction. Rather, it is introduced as an additional layer of support and occurs during a pre-established time for small group time known as WIN time. Intervention progress is communicated regularly to families who are viewed as our learning partners.

Students, who are not showing an adequate ROI after intentional and intensive interventions, may be referred to the child study team with a request for a comprehensive evaluation and possible eligibility for specialized instruction under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). GHES created a vision and established SMART goals for students with disabilities (SWDs) in 2020 to address the academic growth discrepancy between all students and SWDs. Efforts are made to serve all students in the general education system to the greatest extent possible to maintain access to rigorous, universally designed, grade-level instruction. Specialized instruction in co-taught classrooms has increased markedly during the current school year. There is ongoing embedded professional development regarding co-teaching, co-planning, and co-assessment since 2019.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

At Gold Hill Elementary School, 18% of the student population is served within the Gifted and Talented (GT) program. These students have qualified through the South Carolina Gifted Program's eligibility requirements, and are served in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. In order to qualify for the GT program, students must have qualifying scores within two out of three dimensions. Dimension A includes aptitude assessments, such as CogAT. Dimension B includes Achievement tests such as the SC READY (ELA or Math), STAR, and Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Dimension C references performance, such as grade point averages, or the Performance Task Assessment. One exception is if a student scores 96th percentile or above in composite aptitude tests, they would not need an additional score.

GT identification begins with the Spring STAR Reading and Math tests for all students between 1st-5th grades. Any student who scores in the 94th national percentile (or above) in reading or math has secured a qualifying score within the Achievement dimension. All second grade students participate in the CogAT and Iowa assessments. Students who score in the 93rd percentile or higher have earned a qualifying score within the aptitude dimension. Students who were not in the district during 2nd grade, have an older test score and are in need of an updated score, and/or have received a high enough score on STAR will be identified for additional testing.

In addition to students already identified for GT, we have students within the general population who also score above grade level. These students participate in enrichment groups within the classroom or with an interventionist. Students are also challenged to apply their thinking with various project based learning opportunities. Six teachers utilize the PBL Project platform in order to stretch student's thinking across content areas.

3c. Special education:

Gold Hill Elementary School (GHES) offers a variety of special education services and supports that includes two resource teachers, two self-contained level 1 classes for students grades K-5, a resource coach, Occupational Therapy (OT), Physical Therapy (PT), Speech Language Pathologist, Behavior Interventionist, and School Psychologist.

We believe in inclusion where special education resource teachers push into classrooms to co-teach and serve students rather than pulling them from class to a separate setting. They teach a variety of students with learning and health disabilities. The resource coach is helping to implement this inclusive model and works alongside teachers as well. Our resource teachers use a variety of curriculums such as: SPIRE reading, Vmath, Voyager Passport, Building Writers, and Expressive Writing. These allow our teachers to get a baseline for our students who have learning disabilities and instruct them on their current academic levels.

Most of our students in the level 1 self-contained classes are non-verbal with various disabilities. Between picture communication books and assistive technology, teachers are able to communicate with our students in these classes. Our self-contained teachers use an assessment called "ABLES" (Abilities Based Learning and Educational Support). This assessment allows our teachers to assess the learning readiness of students with disabilities. GHES is working on a unified sports program where our older students are helping instruct activities to our self-contained students.

Our speech and language pathologist uses multiple tools to assess students such as: Clinical Assessment of Articulation and Phonology (CAAP)-2, Oral and Written Language Scales (OWLS)-II, and SS-4. All these assessments are used to help create learning goals that are individualized per student.

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

Gold Hill Elementary School is a school that embraces students of different cultures and backgrounds. For students who qualify for English Language support, an Individualized Language Acquisition Plan is developed to meet the students academic needs. Language instruction is provided based on the student's language proficiency as indicated by their ACCESS scores or WIDA screener report. Language support is provided either in the classroom or in a small group format and varies based on proficiency. For example, a student who has a proficiency of 1.0 would receive approximately 30 -60 minutes of language instruction three to five days per week and a student with a proficiency of 4.0 would receive 15 minutes of language instruction per week.

Collaborating with teachers is beneficial in meeting each student's goals to be successful. English as a second language (ESOL) teachers and General Education teachers collaborate to modify assessments and instruction to make content comprehensible. For example, at Gold Hill we have a fourth grade newcomer group consisting of three students. ESOL teachers work with the general education teacher to incorporate a variety of visual aids , word banks, cloze sentences, sentence frames and graphic organizers. These provide academic language support in the classroom.

When the Multilingual student meets the state exit criteria for the ESOL program they are monitored by the ESOL teacher for four years. During this monitoring period grades, test scores, and teacher input is gathered to ensure their academic success.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Creating and sustaining a positive environment is at the forefront of what we do at Gold Hill Elementary School. We have shifted the mindset from teaching the standards to student learning. Through our Professional Learning Community, teachers have become more responsive to the needs of students, and engage in creative planning to incorporate out of the box learning experiences.

During the pandemic, half of our students were learning virtually while the other half were in the building. Our virtual teachers were in the building providing instruction during the day. They did a great job of focusing on essential standards, as they did not have the same flexibility that teachers with face-to-face students had. This prioritization of standards has carried through this year across grade levels.

During virtual learning, teachers made a conscious effort to meet with students in small groups to help them feel a sense of community, though they were learning from a distance. This practice has continued into this year, as many teachers have lunch with smaller groups to encourage peer social interactions while getting to know their students on a deeper level.

We also offer clubs, such as Let Me Run and Girls On the Run, that our upper elementary students participate in after school. These programs have a character building component, in addition to preparing for a 5K race at the end of the season.

Our master schedule includes time for students to receive tiered interventions, called What I Need (WIN) time, and a morning meeting. This 20-minute WIN time allows students time for remediation or enrichment facilitated by the classroom teachers and academic interventionists. Morning meeting is a time for building connections and relationships, giving students a sense of safety and belonging, and building a strong class culture.

Our school counselors initiated a “Lunch Bunch” program, where they target specific students in need of social and/or emotional support, and work on developmentally appropriate social skills. They also partner with Kinder Mourn, as we have several students who have dealt with the loss of a parent. Providing that additional support creates a safety net for our students, which directly impacts their academic success.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Gold Hill Elementary School, we involve our community in many different ways. During the school year, we hold after school clubs. Local businesses come in after school and teach our students fun activities like chess, yoga, and robotics. Dads can volunteer their time to be present at school during the day with the Stinger Dads program. They would work with students in small groups, visit classrooms, eat lunch with their son/daughter, and play with our classes at recess.

We have a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) that holds community events for the school. They organize our spring carnival where families come out to play games, listen to music, and eat food. They host food truck nights at the school where families can get dinner and meet other families to encourage community building. Lastly, our PTO holds monthly meetings that are open to the public. At these meetings, we invite staff and community members to come speak about important topics that may be going on in our district, in our school community, or in the news.

During the pandemic, we had to be creative in order to reach our community. We made it a priority to contact as many families as possible to check in on them by having school administration and teachers calling, holding virtual meetings, or offering recognition or praise. We would play games virtually and have some natural conversations with them. As a school, we held a parade where our staff drove around to each neighborhood so they could see their kids and our families could see them. We also held a drive-thru parade to celebrate the end of the school year.

GHES has a school improvement committee that meets monthly. This committee has representation from the community, parents, and staff members. We work with all members by updating them on what we are doing as a school and brainstorm ways to make our school better.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

The vision of Gold Hill Elementary School (GHES) is a community where everyone is valued, supported, and inspired to grow. Leaders aim to support staff by providing resources, training, availability, and encouragement. Staff can be nominated as a Hornet Hero by a colleague, student, or parent. Every month, one nomination is randomly selected and the Hornet Hero of the month is recognized at a staff meeting and given a few goodies. Staff shout outs are another outlet for providing encouragement to teammates. Administrators provide time to staff one-on-one with quarterly check-ins to see how they are doing and help problem-solve or find solutions to challenges. Within the academic expectations at GHES, leaders seek a balance between providing a consistent curriculum grades K-5 that adequately prepares students to transition from one grade to the next and professional autonomy where teachers are trusted to teach in a manner that fits their style and personality. AT GHES, staff are trusted as professionals; to exhibit their personal passions, and contribute using their greatest strengths.

Teachers and staff at GHES can participate in a variety of professional development (PD) opportunities. PD mini-sessions are offered and allow teachers to lead sessions in areas they are passionate about, have expertise in, or that align to school goals or focus areas. Within our Professional Learning Community, teams are able to practice short- and long-range planning, determine essential standards, focus on student data, and responsive teaching through re-teaching, intervention, and enrichment. Teaching Studies is another form of professional development (PD) that allows for teacher observation and immediate feedback in a roundtable, structured conversation centering on teaching and learning. Book clubs are offered on a regular basis. Some recent studies within the past few months include groups reading "Unpack Your Impact" and "The Five Dysfunctions of a Team." Particularly during the transition to virtual learning, a focus on technology was essential for success. Our technology department offers tech integration ideas through a monthly newsletter. Our Technology Integration Specialist is a valuable resource, able to provide assistance, modeling technology use in the classroom or virtual classroom, or co-teaching lessons alongside classroom teachers.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy and structure at GHES starts with a set of values that connect to our mission and vision, and drive our behaviors daily. Each value is combined with a clarifying question to allow the value to come to life. Values include make it better, collaborate, empower, choose positivity, and embrace the storm.

The foundation of leadership at GHES is built on authentic relationships based around trust. Leadership is shared, starting with the leadership team that includes the literacy coach, lead teacher, two assistant principals, and principal. Each and every team that makes up the larger school team is built around complementary strengths. Collaboration occurs through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) where teams are able to practice short and long-range planning, determine essential standards, focus on student data, and responsive teaching through re-teaching, intervention, and enrichment.

The commitment to make it better requires a future-oriented growth mindset, as we are not satisfied with or stuck on past success. This value starts with school leaders who set the example and view themselves as servant leaders who support the work of staff team members to encourage their growth and success. Leaders continuously engage in professional development as learners through virtual groups, attending conferences, leading and participating in book studies. Even new hires are challenged to make it better at GHES. The message is don't merely fall in line, but instead create new lines.

Leaders empower other staff by valuing their work and offering encouragement. This starts with being visible. One of the weekly commitments of the leadership team is to visit every classroom every week.

Another commitment involves intentionally encouraging at least three staff members on a weekly basis. These are shared during weekly leadership team meetings to hold each other accountable to commitments. This can be done through a written note, face-to-face conversation, or email. 30-second feedback is another specific tool used to encourage and empower teachers, as it focuses on specific teacher behaviors that result in student learning.

Sustainable results are born from a strong school culture. Leaders commit to choose positivity and embrace the challenges of the day. One of the ways administration has adapted to meeting the needs of our community is by shifting responsibilities. One assistant principal focuses on teaching and learning in the area of literacy, the other assistant principal focuses on the area of math, and the principal focuses on collaboration through the PLC.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Our school community at Gold Hill Elementary School (GHES) becomes increasingly diverse with each passing year. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment for all staff and students, and are intentional about celebrating aspects that are unique to our population.

One strategy that we have utilized is offering a book study to our staff centered around “Unpack Your Impact.” This group met over the course of five months, discussing ways in which we could tweak our classroom curriculum to reflect the students that we teach. Additionally, we reflected upon our own instructional practices and paradigms that needed to be changed based on societal evolution. The conversations between staff members and excitement for learning has trickled into their respective teams. We have seen more cultural celebrations (such as Holi, Ramadan, Chinese New Year, Dia De Los Muertos, Diwali, etc.) and in-depth lessons as a result of this meaningful time together.

Previously, we held a cultural night where students worked together to create presentations and visuals to share with our school community. The event was held after school, and families took a gallery walk through the café and hallways, learning about all of the cultures that make GHES so special.

Every week, we send out a school newsletter that includes a “Culture Corner.” This form allows students and parents to share information about their families ranging from rituals and revelries to travels from their home countries. We then take that information and share it on our school news.

The PTO organizes a spring carnival every spring. This year, the carnival will have more of a cultural focus by incorporating foods and games that are reflective of the families that make up our school community.

Teachers have collaborated to create spaces for inquiry, engagement, and connectivity. We encourage teachers to empower students to question the world around them, and have honest conversations. We have seen an increase in student stress and anxiety due to the pandemic and social movements and how those events have affected individual families. We are proud that when students have questions, they have safe spaces to express themselves. Morning meetings allow students to share their concerns with their classmates and teachers, and we are able to support them through the authentic relationships that are built between staff, students, and families. Our school counselors use aspects of the Sanford Harmony Social-Emotional Learning curriculum which provides an additional layer of support.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

An effective school operation is difficult to encapsulate into one main practice. For Gold Hill Elementary School (GHES), we could very easily point to our development of a meaningful mission, vision, and values, a focus on collaboration through a Professional Learning Community, or the implementation of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model. While those practices are all extremely beneficial, essential even, that one practice that has been the most instrumental to the school's success would be the development of our Tier 1 academic foundation.

Within MTSS, tier 1 is the foundation of all the practices deployed within a school. Tier 1 is for all students. It's differentiated instruction that occurs at the classroom level. If we were playing football, tier 1 is the basics: blocking and tackling. Two of the most common areas of concern at GHES have been inconsistency in the teaching and learning process within a grade level or across the school, and finding foundational gaps within instruction for students receiving tier 2 or 3 interventions. Around mid-year during the 2020-21 school year we realized we were consistently coming back to similar conclusions as we were problem-solving various situations. We realized we needed to get back to the basics, and provide exceptionally clear expectations for our tier 1 academic foundation. We centered our work around the idea that clear is kind, unclear is unkind.

We met as a leadership to develop our tier 1 framework, seeking input from school committees, and staff surveys. Our end product is our tier 1 academic foundation, which is broken down by grade level and subject areas, and includes curriculum, instruction, planning (short and long-range), technology, assessment, and grading. Our tier 1 core begins with the idea that within our school environment, we aim to strike a healthy balance between professional autonomy where teachers are trusted to instruct in a way fitting of their style and strengths, and a foundation that provides a consistent curriculum in grades K-5, preparing students to transition smoothly from one grade level to the next.

Focusing on the basics and providing a clear set of expectations within tier 1 has impacted GHES in tremendous ways. We collaborate at higher levels because teams are on the same page with curriculum and instruction. We can better serve our struggling learners by first ensuring we are providing quality, differentiated instruction at the tier 1 level instead of immediately jumping to tier 2 or 3 interventions and supports. A focus on clarifying tier 1 allows GHES to focus on maximizing student growth by meeting each and every student where they are, and moving them forward.