

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 7405 Hoadly Road  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Manassas State VA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 20112-3634

County Prince William County

Telephone (703) 791-3141

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Web site/URL https://coleses.pwcs.edu

E-mail pwessupt@pwcs.edu, EricksTR@pwcs.edu, forgaske@pwcs.edu

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\* Dr. LaTanya McDade E-mail McDadeLD@pwcs.edu  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Prince William County Public School District Tel. (703) 791-7200

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board President/Chairperson Dr. Babur Lateef M.D  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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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

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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):
- 64 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 17 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 13 High schools
  - 2 K-12 schools
- 96 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	4	1	5
K	29	29	58
1	25	23	48
2	48	32	80
3	28	31	59
4	42	36	78
5	30	43	73
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	206	195	401

\*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
  - 2 % Asian
  - 4 % Black or African American
  - 44 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 42 % White
  - 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: 7%

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

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

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2020 until the end of the 2020-2021 school year	19
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	30
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2020	409
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

Arabic, Farsi, Fulah, Lithuanian, Pashto-Northern, Portuguese, Russian, Sign Languages, Spanish, Twi, Ukranian, Vietnamese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 31 %  
124 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 42 %

Total number students who qualify: 168

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP or 504: 14 %  
56 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>3</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>2</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>16</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>15</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: 10
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	17
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	14
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	3
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Daily student attendance	99%	95%	96%	96%	95%
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.

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

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

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

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

Coles Elementary School is a welcoming and inviting school striving for excellence for ALL students. At Coles Elementary School, we are a community of environmentally minded thinkers where learning is achieved, real-world problems are explored, and success is celebrated. The mission of Coles Elementary School is to provide a world-class education to EACH student through a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning styles of all students. The foundation of our learning environment is deep-rooted with high expectations, mutual respect, standards based and a focus on learning.

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

[https://www.pwcs.edu/departments/department\\_of\\_human\\_resources/nondiscrimination\\_policy](https://www.pwcs.edu/departments/department_of_human_resources/nondiscrimination_policy)

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

Not applicable

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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Coles Elementary School (Coles) is located in Manassas, Virginia, a suburb of Washington D.C. and serves over 400 students. Our diverse student body represents 13 different languages and 15 countries. The staff of 60 is also diverse, representing 13 countries and nine languages. Coles is proud to have six staff members who are National Board Certified. Our diversity and staff expertise contribute to the positive and supportive culture of our school.

Coles' commitment to students can be witnessed through our focus on providing an inclusive atmosphere which is creating civic-minded students prepared to be the next generation of leaders in our community.

One key strategy at Coles is a focus on increasing the environmental literacy of our students so they will be prepared to understand and protect the world around them. We were named a 2015 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School recognizing our student efforts to grow and harvest vegetables and fruits in our raised gardens. Students created, planted, and now utilize our butterfly garden consisting of a hundred native plants to attract monarch and other butterflies, which led to Coles being named a Monarch Waystation. Coles has been awarded the Virginia Naturally Award eight years in a row for supporting environmental conservation and stewardship and is a Certified Wildlife Habitat. Furthermore, Coles' students research and study ways to help the watershed of our area, use outdoor rain barrels to water our gardens, host "no paper" days, and students compost fruits and vegetables from our cafeteria to use in our gardens. Fifth graders raise trout from eggs in collaboration with Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and release them into a Virginia waterway towards the end of each school year. Students use critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they engage in STEM and problem-based learning tasks.

Another key strategy is collaborating with parents and local businesses to support our students. A small but active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) partners with Coles to provide engaging after-school clubs to develop and support the whole child and offer enriching experiences after the school day ends. This includes the American Sign Language Club, Cryptozoology Club, Technology Club, Martial Arts Club, Art Club, Garden Club, and Coles Fight Cancer Club. Additionally, our PTA and school work together to host family nights such as our Monster Mash/Family Math and STEM Night, and Family Literacy and Heritage Night. These events focus on building relationships with families, increasing parent understanding of how to help their child at home and provide support for content students are learning. It also provides time for families to spend together in a structured setting. Furthermore, Coles is fortunate to have the assistance from business partners such as Bookworm Central who help get books into student homes over the summer to make sure that reading continues yearlong. Another business partner helping to support our students with economic needs is Immanuel Anglican Church. They have supported food insecurity by providing students and families with weekend food, along with other supports such as school supplies, backpacks, and clothing. Dominion Energy recently worked with our gifted education students to design and create a school orchard consisting of apple, peach, pear, and hazelnut trees with areas for students to observe the life cycles of the trees and fruit, spaces for students to write, and another space for outdoor class meetings. At Coles, we value the supports and experiences our entire community offers our students and school.

One important aspect of our school is that the school division's Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) program is based here. Many of our students in the DHH program are also English Learners (ELs), and the program is designed to challenge all students and meet their unique needs as we mainstream them into the general education setting. The entire school population embraces learning alongside our DHH students as our interpreters help us all learn another communication tool; we all gain from understanding how to express ourselves in different ways.

Coles is committed to providing students with schoolwide opportunities to grow and learn from each other. Each month, the entire school solves the same word problem, and student thoughts are recorded on a bulletin board. We implement schoolwide Fact Dash Friday to encourage all students to practice their math skills, we "Read in the Halls" every other week, implement One Book One School to read the same book schoolwide, and every other week have schoolwide writing in which all students write about a select topic and several students share their writing with the entire school.

Coles prides itself in having a small family feel where every student matters. Our vision is to be a welcoming and inviting school striving for excellence for ALL students. We are a community of environmentally minded thinkers where learning is achieved, real world problems are explored, and success is celebrated.

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

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

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

Coles implements the Virginia Standards of Learning and Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) Curriculum Framework. The school division provides educators with unit and pacing guides complete with research-based strategies, resources for instruction and practice, ideas for challenge and acceleration, practices for cross-curricular integration, and ideas for assessing student understanding. These best practices and pacing guides assist in providing equity across the division and acknowledge student mobility, keeping schools aligned.

Coles' educators have high expectations for all students and make learning opportunities rigorous and relevant. Teacher teams design experiences for students that encourage them to make connections from prior learning and real life to current learning, use authentic and rich texts, use critical thinking skills, engage in focused cooperative learning conversations with peers, and provide productive struggle. Furthermore, our staff develops opportunities for learning that are interdisciplinary from curricula in reading, writing, math, science, social studies and integrate components of art, music, physical education, and technology. Vertical and interdisciplinary groups collaborate about how to best support student understanding of use of learning through integration of curricula. Collaborative learning teams (CLTs) meet twice weekly to plan instruction and practice as well as analyze student learning to guide individual supports and future instruction.

Another aspect of Coles is our focus on developing problem-solving skills, design and engineering, encouraging environmental awareness and conservation, and development of life skills. Through opportunities to solve real-world problems, students use critical thinking and technology to better the world. They are innovators and have visions for solutions, demonstrate perseverance and resilience, and are developing their communication and collaboration skills. These characteristics are defined in the PWCS Profile of a Graduate. Classrooms have technology tools including interactive white boards, one-to-one devices for students, and the teacher technology team weaves the use of coding of robots, using Makey-Makey and Scratch, to help students increase their digital skills.

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

A strong foundation in literacy is important to our students' current and future success. We promote the development of a continuum of literacy skills and strategies through a balanced literacy model. To facilitate their reading, writing, and communication skills, teachers provide opportunities to construct meaning through prior knowledge and making connections. Coles staff believes that students need to read, write, and discuss a variety of texts to develop their literacy skills. Additionally, we encourage respectful and purposeful dialogue in oral and written forms of communication while also giving students experiences of reading authentic text to analyze and apply what they have learned. Students are taught how to effectively research and think actively, critically, inferentially, and reflectively about what they are reading and extend their learning through multiple modes of literacy.

The Virginia Department of Education Curriculum Framework, along with the PWCS unit and pacing guides, are what the CLTs use to develop instructional plans for reading and writing. The primary grades have 120 to 140 minutes per day of reading/English language arts (ELA) instruction and practice, while grades three to five have 90 minutes per day. During our daily blocks, educators use direct instruction, read aloud instruction, interactive writing, and mentor texts to model the literacy standards and metacognitive reading comprehension strategies. Teachers use a Gradual Release of Responsibility Model that consists of direct instruction, guided practice, buddy practice, and independent practice. Educators assess student understanding as they observe student practice and use this information to form flexible and fluid small group instruction. Educators also weave in previously taught literacy skills and power standards that students need to continue practicing. During small group time, students participate in a variety of activities

including: reading with a buddy to practice literacy skills, engaging in independent reading, writing a response or completing a graphic organizer on a power standard, using technology programs such as Lexia or Reading A to Z to practice literacy skills, applying their knowledge of words to complete word-work practice such as sorting, comparing, and contrasting, and writing to communicate their ideas about chosen or given topics. Students may also participate in book or writing discussion groups sharing their thoughts about what they have read or discussing each other's writing and how it can be improved.

Grade-level teams use frequent formative and common assessments to inform their instruction and guide instructional decisions. The data is analyzed regularly, and students are provided differentiated instruction and practice to support their individual needs in development of their reading/ELA/literacy skills. This is accomplished during small group instruction, or during core extension time provided to extend learning, practice skills previously taught, or provide additional instruction and practice if needed. Additionally, the school division provides unit assessments for teachers to benchmark our students' progress in the Virginia Standards of Learning curriculum objectives. Teachers and leaders use this information to dialogue with other schools about effective practices they are implementing where students are obtaining a high level of understanding as a result.

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

The Virginia Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework gives the foundation for the PWCS mathematics program as we promote an environment where students develop a comprehensive and enduring understanding of the concepts of mathematics. Students learn to effectively apply these concepts and use a variety of problem-solving strategies. The program is designed to continue students' development of mathematical fluency, problem-solving skills, mathematical reasoning, and the ability to communicate mathematically. We want students to know math is integral to their lives and how to communicate their mathematical thinking in an efficient manner.

The math instructional block allows primary teachers to provide instruction and practice in the math curriculum objectives and essential understandings for 90 minutes, and teachers in grades three, four, and five have 75 minutes. The PWCS math department provides educators with resources that allow our CLTs to gain a deep understanding of the learning targets, prerequisite skills needed for a unit or lesson, and essential mathematics vocabulary to incorporate into the lessons. The collaborative team designs instructional strategies incorporating concrete, representational, and abstract approaches to build a deeper level of student understanding. Teachers must understand all unit or lesson components to align activities and practice opportunities with the rigor of the essential skills and determine how to accurately assess when students have met the expected learning targets and demonstrate mastery. Furthermore, educators analyze ongoing formative and common assessment data to form flexible and fluid small instructional groups to facilitate targeted tutoring of skills students may be struggling with, weave in continued practice of previously learned skills, and provide opportunities for students to engage in rich, real-world problem-solving tasks.

During math instruction, teachers give students opportunities to explore new learning using hands-on resources prior to direct instruction. During direct instruction, teachers model mathematical reasoning skills using math scenarios, provide students with manipulatives or concrete objects to help them visualize and make sense of the curriculum objectives, begin to weave in pictures and models to represent the concrete, and challenge students to think abstractly. Students are provided practice opportunities such as guided practice, buddy practice, and independent practice allowing teachers to observe and provide feedback as to successful acquisition of the essential understandings. Educators use observation data from practice to guide instructional decisions during small group work time. During small group work time, students who are not working directly with the teacher are working in pairs or teams, working independently on current and previously taught skills, or using Dreambox Learning or other technology tools to practice skills where they need to grow.

Teachers frequently assess student progression towards learning targets mastery in a variety of ways such as exit tickets, observation of students solving math problems, student verbal and pictorial explanation of their thinking, Virginia Department of Education Just-in-Time Quick Checks, teacher developed quick checks, and the school division's unit assessments as a summative understanding of student learning. If students

need additional time, instruction, and practice to successfully master curriculum objectives, or if students need additional challenge, teachers utilize core extension time to target these needs.

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

Coles utilizes the Virginia Standards of Learning science curriculum framework and PWCS aligned pacing and unit guides as the road map for science instructional practices. Students learn about topics including weather, natural resources, force, motion, energy, living systems, physical science, Earth and space systems, and life processes. Our vision is to provide a robust foundation in scientific literacy to develop confident, lifelong learners capable of applying the scientific lens of inquiry to any life context.

Coles staff provides students with hands-on science activities that include experiments, labs, field trips to our school garden, orchard, butterfly garden, water features, composting bins, nearby discovery trail, nearby landfill, and visits to local parks to make connections from real-life experiences to curriculum objectives. Additionally, Coles teaches the engineering design process to further develop their science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills and provide inquiry-based learning opportunities. Many of our educators are trained in Project Learning Tree, problem-based learning, Project WILD, Project WET, STEM and use this professional learning to excite, engage, and provide unique science learning experiences for students.

The academic vocabulary within science is rigorous, and students participate in cooperative discussions to identify and represent science academic vocabulary and make connections to the real world. Students apply learning from direct instruction to hands-on experiences and real-world problems or scenarios. Assessments are multimodal, often requiring students to demonstrate their learning through ways other than a traditional assessment. Examples include asking students for a visual representation of their learning, an auditory summary, working through an experiment using the scientific method, researching and creating a solution to a problem connected to their learning, or using a coding program to showcase knowledge. The varied formative and summative assessment types provide data to teachers so they understand the extent of the student's knowledge and ability to apply their understanding. The data from these varied formats help drive future instructional decisions.

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

Coles Elementary School utilizes the Virginia Standards of Learning social studies curriculum framework and PWCS aligned pacing and unit guides as the road map for social studies instructional practices. Students learn about topics such as geography, civics, Virginia history, economics, important people in history, map skills, and ancient civilizations. The goal of social studies instruction is to prepare students to identify, understand, and work to solve the challenges facing our diverse nation in an increasingly interdependent world. Educators teach the importance of citizenship to prepare students to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives.

During Tier 1 instruction and practice, teachers build upon prior knowledge and previous lessons while facilitating relevant and engaging learning through experiences such as research, exploring pictures and primary sources, asking questions of presenters, and visiting historical sites such as Jamestown and Yorktown, the National Museum of the American Indian, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, and Mount Vernon. Students synthesize their learning in a variety of ways such as creating projects identifying the impact of a person or event, comparing and contrasting major events or people in our history, creating a product to share with the entire learning community, participating in academic debates, and creating videos using various story-telling apps or presentation software programs. Teachers utilize a variety of assessments to determine student successful acquisition of skills such as exit tickets, rubrics for projects, written responses, conversations, quick checks, and unit assessments provided by the school division. Students are provided with opportunities to extend their understanding as well as work in small groups to continue expansion of their understanding. Teachers frequently review previously taught objectives and ask students to determine how the previous and past topics connect to each other and have students reason through the impact of significant current events or people.

## **1f. For secondary schools:**

Not applicable

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

Coles' pre-school program exclusively serves deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children ages two through four. Some students have profound hearing loss while others have mild hearing loss. In some instances, families have been minimally able to communicate with their child as they have not learned American Sign Language. When this occurs, students have not developed a language and may only use pointing to communicate. In other instances, students may have partial hearing but have difficulty discriminating sounds and need additional support to develop communication and language skills. Thus, our program truly gives many students their first language and communication experience and provides these pre-school students with student mentors who may also be deaf and hard of hearing.

Our program provides students with real-world, hands-on experiences to help them understand the vocabulary and language around them while learning prerequisite skills to read, write, solve math problems, and connect to science and social studies concepts. Students dig in our garden to find leaves and acorns and learn about sorting by color, shape, texture, and size while also learning about the fall season. They use potatoes to stamp with paint and construction paper and learn about colors and shapes. The teacher facilitates learning about matter through exploring the different stages of water and what happens when it is heated and frozen. Throughout their learning experiences, students are also learning vocabulary. This is accessed through spoken and signed language. Students also learn about letters, words, sounds, numbers, writing, colors, and shapes within these experiences that directly align with future learning in kindergarten and beyond. The teacher also facilitates communication between peers through sign language or speaking. Some students have assistive technology to support their vocabulary and communication development. When students attend our program, they make many gains and in later grades are often able to participate in some general education classes.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Students explore visual arts, music, physical education (PE), library-media, social-emotional and character building, and technology. Educators utilize the Virginia Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework documents alongside PWCS pacing guides and unit resources as the roadmap for instruction. Students engage in 45 minutes of PE a minimum of twice per six days, 45 minutes of music education several times per week, 45 minutes of visual arts weekly, and they actively participate in 45 minutes of library-media learning weekly. The technology coach creates lessons to integrate technology and digital citizenship into lessons to enrich grade-level learning objectives while achieving the Virginia Department of Education Technology Standards.

Teachers design cross-curricular lessons that also target grade-level objectives. In music, third grade students learn about fractions and explore the simple machines within musical instruments. In art, fourth grade students visit our butterfly garden and learn how to draw native plants. In PE, second grade students study patterns.

Music instruction teaches students how to apply creative thinking to compose and improvise music, interpret music, develop ideas for creating and performing music, and develop critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate music. Students learn to formulate personal responses to music, understand cultural and historical influences, respond to music with movement, explore music literacy, and develop skills for individual and ensemble instrumental and vocal performances. Coles' students share their learning through concerts and video recordings highlighting their many musical talents.

PE activities target motor skill development, anatomical basis of movement, fitness planning, social development, and energy balance. Students play games to practice these skills including bowling, volleyball, basketball, noodle hockey, and they practice endurance running. The PE teacher utilizes our outdoor fitness trail each morning during fall and spring to start the school day and provides students with an indoor fitness

trail as well.

Visual art instruction focuses on aesthetic and critical thinking skills, encouraging students to become risk takers and creative problem solvers. Students learn about visual communication while making original artwork. A goal is for students to embrace art as a visual language to express and communicate their ideas and feelings. The art teacher plans engaging lessons using drawing, painting, collage work, creating sculptures, and using textiles. Students are always so proud of their creations.

During library-media instruction, the librarian collaborates with teachers and aligns her lessons to state standards and areas of need identified by teachers. The librarian integrates technology into lessons including using “bee bots” that students code to get from Virginia to another state they researched. She also reads stories to students who then use Scratch to create their own ending. Students in fourth grade research Virginia’s history and create a presentation in Sway to communicate their findings.

The school counselor creates lessons focused on academic, career, and social-emotional development. The school counselor collaborates with staff to target specific areas of need to include kindness in the classroom, online safety, career exploration, and good hygiene. Additionally, the school counselor works with small groups focused on social-emotional skills, coping skills, and academic improvement.

### **3. Academic Supports**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level:**

At Coles, all staff maintains a high level of expectations for all students. Teachers study and become very familiar with their students through ongoing data collection throughout the year. With this data analysis and the ongoing informal data that is collected daily in classrooms, teachers can identify students performing below grade level and tailor their instruction to meet the needs of those students during whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction and through interventions put in place to assist students with their individualized needs.

For students performing below grade level, extra learning opportunities are available to ensure they receive additional supports to progress toward the mastery of state objectives. In grades kindergarten through three, the results from the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) bring visibility to student needs and help align instructional support and intervention. In grades three to five, additional staff helps support students through targeted tutoring in reading and math. Teachers also provide targeted tutoring during core extension and before and after school for students at all grade levels. We also use computer-based programs as an additional resource/intervention. Lexia helps students master foundational reading skills by assessing skills and allowing teachers to provide differentiated practice to improve their reading success, and Dreambox Learning helps increase students’ conceptual understanding and build a solid math foundation.

The Response to Intervention process provides more in-depth analysis of student data and allows teachers to develop other interventions that may better suit a student; this helps support lower performing students and allows teachers to better close their gaps in learning. By collaborating with other staff members and the specialists that support teachers and students in the educational setting, we can create, implement, and monitor student growth throughout the school year and ensure that each student below grade level receives a level of instruction that is tailored to their needs.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

At Coles, there is a lot of pride in the high-quality teaching and hard work that the entire staff puts in every day to ensure students are receiving the world-class education they deserve. Due to this quality instruction and the rigor that is applied to all our teaching, we have many students who are performing above grade level. When analyzing data from common assessments and discussing observations of how students are performing in the classroom, teachers identify the above grade-level students and plan lessons accordingly, ensuring that these students are stretching their thinking, staying engaged, and pushing beyond their comfort levels to reach higher levels of academic success. Lessons have included designing book talks and creating

interactive games for other students. Once again, core extension is also a time in which students are provided enrichment opportunities.

For students who demonstrate high levels of academic accomplishment or show exceptional academic potential beyond their age peers, Coles meets bi-monthly to see if these students are eligible for gifted education services in one or more specific academic areas. At Coles, the Gifted Education Program provides pull-out resource services for students who need advanced and complex content. The content is paced and sequenced to respond to their intellectual curiosity, exceptional problem-solving abilities, and rapid acquisition and mastery of information. Content examples include students researching Greek philosophers and researching the brain. Students develop advanced skills in critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, collaboration, and conceptual thinking to encourage and enable them to become self-directed learners. Differentiated classroom services are also provided through collaboration between classroom teachers and the gifted resource teacher to provide extension and critical thinking opportunities for all above grade-level students in all academic areas.

### **3c. Special education:**

To ensure that all our special education teachers are providing top quality instruction, all special education staff is informed of the many professional development opportunities offered in the school division. This allows them to be up to date on all research-based programs, interventions, and strategies they can implement in their classrooms and with their students.

At Coles, we have one learning disability teacher, two teachers for students with emotional disabilities, two teachers for students who are deaf and hard of hearing in grades kindergarten through five, one teacher for students who are in pre-K and are deaf and hard of hearing, and one speech pathologist. The kindergarten through fifth grade program and pre-K program for students who are deaf and hard of hearing are unique as we are the only elementary school in the school division to offer this program. For this reason, we have students from all over the county travel here every day. Coles also has transfer students from our neighboring county who come to Coles for our unique services. Having this program also requires approximately ten interpreters of sign language who are assigned to the students when they are mainstreamed into the general education setting.

The special education teachers collaborate with our general education teachers during weekly CLT meetings and before and/or after school. This collaboration ensures that all our special education students are accessing the general education curriculum and are following and maintaining the same pace as their general education peers. Our expectations are high for all our students, and staff work daily to ensure that all identified strategies/interventions/accommodations for all students are met, based on their Individualized Education Program.

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

Coles is committed to ensuring all students are always applying critical thinking strategies throughout the school day. There are three English Learner (EL) teachers for approximately one fourth of our students. Our ELs are provided direct services to help develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Our general education teachers are trained in sheltered instruction and provide academic instruction on state content standards specifically designed to make their grade-level subject matter concepts understandable to ELs while promoting their English language development.

In planning lessons with sheltered instruction in mind, teachers focus on all four language domains (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in their lesson. Teachers address multiple instructional needs during the lesson while highlighting all language uses. This sheltered instruction delivers language-rich, grade-level content area instruction in English in a manner that is comprehensible to our ELs and will guide them to progress academically while developing proficiency in English.

Coles staff has also worked hard at partnering with parents. This collaboration has helped parents be a more active part of the educational growth of their children. Teachers meet with parents throughout the school

year to show them strategies they can use at home with their children while they are reading or doing math practice. Parents are also encouraged to take their children to different places in our community to explore and build experiences that they can then connect to the content being taught in the classroom. Families are given lists of local parks, historical sites, and science-related locations. The administrative team meets families at our local library to help them obtain library cards and learn to use the library. Staff also organized trips to the Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Museum, a working farm where students see simple machines in action, and a park to learn about habitats and ecosystems.

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

Not applicable

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

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

Coles strongly believes that building relationships, setting high expectations, providing opportunities for student leadership, meeting students where they are and identifying strengths, teaching students life skills, and facilitating a sense of community are important strategies in engaging students in their learning and providing a positive learning environment.

We created a program we call “Elements of Success—Four Elements One World,” which is a large component of our school culture. Students, school staff, and bus drivers are assigned an “element” (consisting of the four natural elements: Neptune representing water, Ignis representing fire, Makani representing air, Terra representing earth) and are part of that group until they leave our school. Each element works together as a team to be responsible, respectful, trustworthy, flexible, display perseverance, and make good choices. The elements are led by fifth grade student leaders selected by staff. Student element leaders are provided leadership coaching and lead monthly element meetings focused on life skills, developing relationships, and goal setting. The youngest students are buddied with fourth graders and first graders are paired with fifth graders, providing older students with leadership opportunities. Quarterly assemblies celebrate how the elements have demonstrated responsibility, respect, trustworthiness, flexibility, and perseverance. “Elements of Success” has taught students about the impact of individuals on others and the need to contribute positively to the success of our school community.

Another practice promoting a positive and supportive environment is the use of regular class meetings. Students and teachers co-create classroom expectations, a class vision, and mission. These are frequently reviewed and evaluated to make sure the class is on the right path to reach and meet expectations. Individual students are met where they are and provided additional supports such as a staff mentor to check in and out with on a regular schedule. Students maintain notebooks keeping track of academic progress and to log strategies or actions they will take to achieve goals they have set. Staff conference with students as students lead a discussion about their progress towards reaching goals.

When students were home learning remotely, we were able to hold virtual Element meetings, continue to coach student element leaders, and gain insight on how to support them in the new virtual setting. School counselors held virtual group meetings that focused on life skills, self-care, mindfulness, responsibility, and managing emotions, similar to what they would have focused on in person. Coles also celebrated student successes with spirit weeks, virtual assemblies, positive phone calls home, and mailing positive post cards home.

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

Coles staff value partnerships with families and the community as students are most successful when we work together. Our school provides pertinent and meaningful information to help families help their children. This includes weekly digital newsletters in multiple languages to ensure we are reaching all parents. Furthermore, families receive weekly communication from teachers about the happenings in the classroom. The administrative team also makes “good calls home” frequently to share positive news about students. By keeping our families abreast of our school culture and goals, parents can actively contribute to their child’s achievement in school.

Coles organizes new family orientations and provide supports to our newest families by hosting “Kindergarten Camp,” designed to help kindergartners learn about school and provide families with resources before school begins. The PTA organizes a “Popsicle Party” for families and students on the last day of camp so families can begin creating relationships in our community. The Coles Advisory Council plays an integral role in reviewing student performance data and assisting with our continuous improvement plan.

The experiences of our families positively contribute to student success. Therefore, we invite and train

volunteers to assist us in a variety of ways. One strategy is to encourage dads to spend time working in our classrooms, helping in the cafeteria and at recess, and mentoring students. Another strategy is to partner with the nearby high school National Honor Society to practice reading with students, solving math problems, or vocabulary. We also appreciate how our business partners contribute to our students learning such as Heeling House and Tail-Waggin' Tutors bringing dogs into our school and allowing students to read to them. Additionally, staff has worked closely with Girl Scout troops and Eagle Scouts to enhance our indoor and outdoor learning environments including an outdoor music lab, bat boxes in trees surrounding our school, materials for our Maker Space, and a pergola for outdoor learning opportunities. These practices impact our students by providing positive role models, additional supports targeting academic skills, and opportunities to increase real-world experiences and problem-solving skills.

To help families support their children at home, kindergarten teachers have provided work sessions on how to practice recognizing and writing letters, practice sight words, letter sounds, and using rhyme to build reading skills. Staff provides classes and resources to families of ELs to help them utilize technology tools, the public library, and other local resources.

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

Coles Elementary School believes that hiring the best players for our team is essential for student success. Continually developing our educators increases their effectiveness and encourages collaboration among colleagues. Staff is encouraged to share their goals and interests so we can incorporate these areas into professional learning plans. Additionally, our staff analyzes student performance data to assist in determining next steps for our school's strategic plan and align our professional learning plan with this map for continuous improvement.

An essential part of our professional culture is the commitment to CLTs in which all team members actively participate. The CLTs collectively unpack standards, identify learning targets and success criteria, develop effective and rigorous instructional strategies, determine how to best measure student learning, and continuously spiral back to review skills in which students need additional practice. This practice ensures all educators are aligned, targeted, and are armed with highly effective strategies to teach our diverse student body. As we moved from in-person learning to distance learning to a hybrid model and back to in-person learning full time, our CLTs and regular professional learning via staff meetings allowed us to have continuity, alignment, and supportive discussions, leading to implementation of effective instructional practices in all settings.

CLTs also provide feedback to teachers through participation in micro-teaching. Dependent upon student data and team professional learning needs, focus areas are determined, and educators video record themselves teaching a lesson. Videos are viewed together to discuss what practices the teacher used that were impactful to students' successful acquisition of skills.

The leadership team participates in instructional rounds focused on the instructional core (what the teacher is doing, what the students are doing, the task, and the rigor of content). Through this practice, we identify a "problem of practice" and develop a theory of action to continuously improve our instruction. Lead mentors organize opportunities to discuss, observe, and provide feedback leading to increases in novice teacher skills and knowledge.

Another effective practice leading to our strong professional culture are staff meetings that include professional learning provided by our staff or other experts focused on identified areas of growth, as well as vertical teams engaged in discussions about implementation of previous professional learning and its impact on student learning. If teachers want to learn more about a strategy, they know who to talk to as they have heard, through these vertical team discussions, which colleagues can provide additional support in that identified strategy.

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

At Coles Elementary School, leadership believes all staff are leaders. We learn from each other, and teamwork is at the heart of our school culture. We work together to ensure our students achieve academic and social-emotional growth. The administrative team grows the instructional capacity of our educators through regular, focused feedback based on observations.

Our leadership team consists of representatives of all members of our staff including grade-level teachers, specialists, instructional assistants, and the assistant principal and principal. Each representative is identified by their team to lead. The leadership team meets regularly to review student performance data, trends from previous years of data, survey results, and observations from instructional rounds. Each year, the leadership team generates our school's continuous improvement plan by utilizing data analysis tools such as relations diagrams, affinity diagrams, and "5 whys" diagrams. The team monitors progress towards achieving the goals and actions within the plan, makes adjustments based on data, and aligns our school's professional learning plan to the continuous improvement plan. The leadership team models lifelong learning through the reading of professional books and implementation of strategies learned. The team participates in instructional rounds and identifies problems in practice leading to a theory of action. The leadership team also contributes to budgetary decisions making sure they align with continuous improvement plan goals.

Additionally, parent and teacher leaders engage through the Coles Advisory Council as they contribute to the continuous improvement plan and monitor student performance throughout the year. This team also exemplifies lifelong learning as they share effective instructional practices with staff to increase student learning. The PTA plays a vital leadership role in creating avenues of engaging families and increasing school resources.

Coles Elementary School builds the leadership capacity of staff and encourages input of stakeholders through committees focused on numerous academic areas and multi-tiered systems of support. These committees make suggestions and provide training in topics such as increasing writing skills, enhancing use of technology tools, strategies to increase problem-solving skills, integrating real-world problems into instruction and practice, and supporting students with poor attendance.

Coles staff also value the development of leadership skills in students as our school counselor and principal work directly with them to provide leadership training and give leadership opportunities at monthly Element meetings that are focused on building life skills and goal setting. Additionally, fourth graders are encouraged to emerge as leaders in their roles as mentors to primary students.

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

Coles Elementary School is a culturally rich school that celebrates what all students, staff, and families bring to our learning community. The school division provides training on culturally responsive teaching and learning to ensure educators are equipped with strategies to address the diverse needs of all students. Additionally, Coles provides training about comprehensible input strategies, cooperative learning strategies, assessment of learning, use of social-emotional learning strategies, class meetings, and total participation techniques. Administrative staff also provide opportunities for educators to share successes in these areas.

To encourage families to participate in our learning community, we communicate weekly in multiple languages sharing learning targets, clubs being offered, ideas for supporting their child academically at home, and invitations to community building and learning nights.

During CLT meetings, educators discuss the prerequisite skills students need to access new learning, the academic vocabulary required for learning new objectives, how to understand student prior knowledge of learning targets, and how to build background knowledge of students prior to a new unit. Teams determine which rich texts to use to access literacy skills and seek the input from colleagues for additional ideas of multi-cultural text to make connections to literacy content. CLTs discuss implementing the concrete, representative, and abstract model for teaching math objectives.

Additionally, CLTs discuss each student's growth in mastering curriculum objectives and collectively plan for their continued practice and spiral review of previously learned skills. Furthermore, we hold students

accountable for their learning by designing total participation strategies during lessons, facilitating purposeful cooperative peer discussions, and utilizing retrieval practices to ensure new learning occurs and prior learning is remembered and used.

Staff hold weekly meetings to discuss topics including respect, responsibility, kindness, student expectations, making good decisions, and goal setting. Each student maintains a data notebook indicating their goals and their success towards reaching their goals.

Coles' school counselors provide frequent social-emotional learning regarding a growth mindset, "filling other people's buckets," organizational skills, mindful practices, making good choices, being kind, respectful and responsible, contributing to the community, and goal setting. They also work with small groups to enhance student skills in monitoring their emotions, being a friend, using mindfulness strategies, and managing stress. Students are heard encouraging their peers, discussing choices they made, and providing ideas of how they could turn a situation around.

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

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Selecting just one practice that has been the most instrumental in our school's success is difficult as many strategies contribute to the academic and socio-emotional achievement of our students within our learning community. Our "tiny and mighty" school of 410 students and 60 staff members unites together to create a learning community of "Four Elements One World," developing environmentally minded thinkers and real-world problem solvers striving for success for all students. Collaboration makes high expectations possible for all. Establishing these high expectations and developing the capacity of staff, parents, students, and our community to work together to meet those expectations is the key to our success.

The entire team recognizes the impact of our school, classrooms, teachers, support staff, specialists, administrators, students, families, and community working together to provide students with the learning opportunities and life-skills needed to thrive not only in the present but to ensure all students have bright futures. We value the significance of collective efficacy and student and teacher agency and are determined to reach the goals we are tasked with achieving. Coles teaches our students to think outside of themselves by focusing on how we can positively impact others, our community, our environment, and our world through the decisions we make by being respectful, responsible, flexible, trustworthy, and persevering. The entire learning community works together to provide our diverse students with the resources and supports they need to grow.

A collaborative culture contributes to our school's success as our teachers, specialists, administrators, and support teams understand each student's strengths and abilities and collectively design individual student plans for success and support and hold each other accountable for achieving this goal. We appreciate the collaboration, relationships, and experiences of our families and community partners and benefit from their input in our decision-making processes. Trust and confidence allow us to work as a team to focus on what the school needs to propel our learners. Students collaborate to generate ideas and solutions for real-world problems. They conference with teachers, administrators, and families to set goals and actively reflect on continuous improvement.

We know the importance of our highly effective, passionate, caring, and dedicated staff who believes each student can achieve success. By co-creating a culture of excellence and community spirit, our vision of continuous student and teacher growth can be reached. As our new Superintendent commented recently, "It feels good to be a Roadrunner at Coles Elementary."