U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 7980 East Walnut Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Lexington   State IN   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 47138-8623

County Scott County

Telephone (812) 752-8924   Fax (812) 889-2094
Web site/URL
http://www.scsd2.k12.in.us/lexingtonelementary_home.aspx   E-mail crose@scsd2.k12.in.us

Twitter Handle
https://twitter.com/LexingtonIN

Facebook Page
https://www.facebook.com/Lexington-Elementary-School-205719629445933/?ref=hl   Google+

YouTube/URL   Blog   Other Social Media Link

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. Marc Slaton   E-mail mslaton@scsd2.k12.in.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Scott District 2   Tel.   (812) 752-8921
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 Mr. Jason Kendall
(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, write N/A in the space.

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. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.

3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.

6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.

7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.

8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district   4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   1 Middle/Junior high schools
                                        1 High schools
                                        0 K-12 schools

                                        6 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [ ] Urban or large central city
   [ ] Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
   [ ] Suburban
   [X] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying
   school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	15	13	28
1	22	18	40
2	15	18	33
3	15	20	35
4	11	26	37
5	13	10	23
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	91	105	196

4. Racial/ethnic composition of
    the school:

    <u>0</u> % American Indian or Alaska Native
    <u>0</u> % Asian
    <u>0</u> % Black or African American
    <u>0</u> % Hispanic or Latino
    <u>0</u> % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
    <u>99</u> % White
    <u>1</u> % 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 2014 – 2015 school year: <u>13</u>%

    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 *to* the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	14
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	13
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	27
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	208
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.130
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: <u>0</u> %
                                                          <u>0</u> Total number ELL

    Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
    <u>N/A</u>

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: <u>63</u> %
    Total number students who qualify: <u>129</u>

8. Students receiving special education services: <u>13</u> %
                                                          <u>26</u> 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. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

    <u>0</u> Autism   <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
    <u>0</u> Deafness   <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired
    <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness   <u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability
    <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   <u>7</u> Speech or Language Impairment
    <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment   <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
    <u>0</u> Mental Retardation   <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
    <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities   <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

9.   Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: <u>16</u>

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	11
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	2
Paraprofessionals	6
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   <u>19:1</u>

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
     Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

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 <u> </u>   No <u>X</u>

     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.

Lexington Elementary School is a learning community where every child learns, grows, and achieves.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Much like its Massachusetts namesake, Lexington, Indiana, is rich in history. Public school buildings have been landmarks in Lexington Township for nearly 150 years. Our township occupies sixty-six square miles of rural southeastern Scott County, Indiana. For decades the building housed elementary, junior high, and high school students. In 1964, Scott County School District 2 was created through the consolidation of schools in Finley, Johnson, Lexington, and Vienna Townships. Today the district operates one high school, one middle school, and four elementary schools. Lexington Elementary is smallest of the four and services students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

The small town of Lexington is located approximately 30 miles north of Louisville, Kentucky. It was founded in 1874, making it the oldest platted community in the county. In its early years, Lexington was the county seat, and our school sits in the center of the original town square. A vintage, knee-high rock wall surrounds Lexington Elementary and serves as a constant reminder of our community's proud, pioneer heritage.

In 1983, the old building was renovated, and a new wing was constructed. Today our school accommodates 205 students. LES has a longstanding tradition of high academic achievement. Our performance on Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) exams typically ranks among the highest in the region. In addition, Lexington Elementary is an important hub of community activity. Many local residents attended LES, and they still display a strong sense of loyalty to our school. School functions are well attended, and the gymnasium is occasionally rented for wedding receptions, family reunions, and sports activities. Our building has also been the home of the Lexington High School Alumni Association since 1932. In June, the group will host its 84th annual banquet, and alumni from around the U.S. will gather in our gymnasium. Lexington Elementary is more than just a school; it's the heartbeat of our community.

The past two decades brought many demographic changes to Lexington Township. Farms that had been in families for generations were sold to developers, and the property was subdivided into lots for modular housing. This trend adversely affected the stability of our school population. People, attracted to the area by low cost housing, were taking the place of our traditional farm families. The problem was compounded by the destabilization of the housing market caused by the Great Recession. Several local factories closed which caused high countywide unemployment that in turn led to record numbers of mortgage foreclosures. Our school found itself in the unenviable position of addressing a growing mobility rate and declining enrollment at the same time. These events were reflected in our free/reduced lunch numbers that climbed above 60% for the first time in school history.

Unfortunately, these economic woes also led to increased drug use in our county accompanied by the predictable social problems associated with it. On February 26, 2015, Scott County's HIV outbreak made headlines worldwide. On April 4, 2015, the outbreak was upgraded to a Public Health Disaster Emergency. Soon thereafter, Indiana Governor Mike Pence authorized our state's first-ever needle exchange program. The Center for Disease Control reported on February 1, 2016, that the number of confirmed HIV cases in Scott County had grown to 188. The search for HIV positive individuals, the needle exchange program, and the fight against illegal drug use have intensified. In the face of adversity, we have heightened our to efforts to educate and challenge children to rise above these circumstances.

Despite the challenges faced, Lexington remains committed to providing an environment that not only fosters educational growth but also nurtures students socially and emotionally. Keys to Lexington's success come from a curriculum that emphasizes thorough instruction on state standards. Additionally, Lexington hosts a vast array of programs that provide academic and emotional support to all students.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Lexington Elementary prides itself on a rigorous curriculum designed to maximize student exposure to core concepts essential for academic growth. The core curriculum is based on Indiana's academic standards: reading, English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Indiana academic standards were overhauled in 2014, and Lexington strove to effortlessly integrate the new standards into classroom instructional practices. Lexington staff has been an integral part of the district's efforts to devise a district wide curriculum plan. The plan outlines the yearly sequence of instruction as well as providing teachers with essential questions, lesson plans, and supplemental material.

Lexington Elementary uses a wealth of materials for its reading and English/language arts curriculum. Lower grades use a reading basal to allow all students to focus on essential skills. Saxon phonics is also extensively used to provide the framework necessary for students to master early literacy. Upper grades implement novels to teach reading standards while also exposing students to various genres to encourage lifelong reading. All teachers use the Accelerated Reader program in their curriculum, allowing teachers to differentiate instruction by having students read and grow at their own academic levels. Prior to the Indiana Department of Education's request to have dedicated time scheduled for reading instruction, Lexington implemented its own 90-minute block schedule to emphasize reading.

Lexington has a multifaceted approach to its math curriculum. Envision is the district-adopted curriculum though Accelerated Math is extensively used to drive instruction. This combination was selected to help ensure that foundational skills are thoroughly reviewed. Lower grades emphasize math facts to build core knowledge while upper grades focus on using those skills to solve real-world problems. The emphasis on block scheduling carries over to mathematics instruction. Lexington established a mathematics block schedule to coincide with its implementation of the same for reading and English/language arts, two years ahead of the Indiana Department of Education's timeline. Each teacher uses the district's mathematics curriculum plan to drive instruction while using a plethora of resources: textbooks, Accelerated Math, and other online programs. As with reading and English/language arts, the diverse use of materials allows teachers to provide differentiated instruction for all students, whether they are above or below grade level.

Teachers have worked strenuously to provide an engaging and thorough science curriculum based on state standards even though district curriculum plans are currently not extended to science. Without the use of a traditional textbook, teachers have been innovative in designing instruction through various sources. Teachers use science kits to illustrate key academic standards. Students and their families are engaged through relevant, yet inexpensive, take home activities on the iPad. Integration is also essential to the science curriculum. Teachers use textbooks as well as nonfiction science related books to incorporate both reading and science instruction. Weekly news magazines provide articles about topical science concepts. Science and mathematics are also streamlined through the amalgamation of crossover standards such as measurement and graphing.

As with science, integration plays a key role in the social studies curriculum at Lexington Elementary. Historical nonfiction and fiction text as well as weekly news magazines provide coverage of key topics while allowing the integration of reading components. Field trips and guest speakers are planned yearly to help bring social studies to life for students. Though the initiative for a district wide curriculum is not currently pertinent to social studies, upper grades with extensive social studies standards have designed their own state standard based curriculum that provides material and content that challenges advanced students while maintaining a focus on essential topics for all students' comprehension.

While each core subject area's curriculum has built-in differentiation to help target a wide array of student achievement, Lexington continues to provide support for students above and below grade level through other means. Lexington's Title I staff provides support for students that are struggling with academic goals through daily intervention times. The Reading Buddies program pairs fourth and fifth grade students with emergent readers in kindergarten and first grade to assist with reading comprehension. Response to

Intervention (RTI) meetings help to focus support on those students with significant achievement gaps. High achieving students benefit from a multitude of advanced programs: high ability, Math Bowl, and Spell Bowl. These programs enable students to receive instruction above grade level while also instilling a sense of achievement through competition and special presentations.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Lexington Elementary has long understood the value of providing a well-rounded education for its students. As such, Lexington provides instruction in an abundance of non-core curriculum areas. These opportunities are provided through a mix of integrated and stand alone instruction.

Art instruction is provided to all students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade for 40 minutes a week. Students are instructed on a diverse selection of artistical topics, from methodology to historical movements. Core curriculum topics, such as working with angles or creating writing to correspond to artistic creations, are integrated as appropriate. Advanced projects for upper grades are designed to challenge and expand artistic knowledge. Many projects have multiple avenues of completion to support students with varying skill sets. A majority of lessons are structured, but student creativity is fostered through independent creation time.

Schedules also allow for all students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade to receive music instruction for 40 minutes per week. Music standards cover a multitude of concepts from instruction on musical performance to the amalgamation of music and literary skills. All fourth grade students are introduced to playing the recorder which includes correct fingering techniques and reading music. Instructional content also illustrates the influence music has in other forms of art. Annual concerts are held in which students get to perform the skills that have been acquired during the course of the year. Differentiated lessons also occur in music as lessons often include both basic and advanced musical concepts to challenge students regardless of their musical ability.

While health itself is a credit through all grade levels, ample instruction is provided to see that students learn essential skills. Health is taught throughout the year. Fourth and fifth grade students attend health lessons provided by local health employees that focus on important health skills. Weekly news magazines frequently have articles or discussion points that highlight health concepts. Health and nutritional standards are often incorporated within other core curriculum areas, with many concepts being tied into science.

Lexington does not have a set foreign language curriculum, but exposure to foreign languages is a significant portion of the school's curriculum. Many novel and basal studies include stories about foreign cultures which include foreign vocabulary. All teachers have access to a program from the high school where advanced high school students visit classrooms once a week for a nine week period to teach students basic vocabulary in both French and Spanish. Upper grades use vocabulary exercises focusing on foreign vocabulary that is integrated into English society.

Lexington's schedule provides students with abundant opportunities for physical education. Lower grade classes have 60 minutes of scheduled recess time while the upper grades have 50 minutes per day. Lexington's vast playground allows students to run, play sports, traverse obstacle courses, and climb equipment to exercise every day as weather permits. Students are provided with play equipment, such as balls and jump ropes, to add to the variety of student offerings. Students are encouraged to play and every effort is made to get students outside for that opportunity. If inclement weather is in the area, students are given equipment and allowed to play in the gymnasium. Teachers also have access to scooters, field hockey equipment, basketballs, and other items to provide exercise opportunities for individual classes. The district also has a program that periodically visits Lexington to focus on healthy lifestyles through exercising. Physical education is also used as an incentive, as students earn extra recess time for achieving particular AR goals.

As Lexington Elementary is a school with one-to-one technology access, technology education is vital to the school's maintained success. Students have access to programs that teach about basic computer skills such as keyboarding and digital citizenship. Lower grade teachers introduce useful programs such as presentation

and word processing software while upper grade teachers focus on the advanced features of the same programs. Teachers constantly submit requests for new applications to be installed on the student devices to help students gain essential computer skills. The district employs several technology specialists. These are not only available to help teachers receive the skills, but also available to walk students through the proper usage of new programs. Teachers also receive regular training which in turn is used to train students on various computer skills.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Lexington Elementary is a Title I school which aims to bridge the gap between students from diverse economic backgrounds. In 2008, we transitioned from targeted assistance to a school-wide support and service model. This changeover has allowed funding for extra tutors. Title I assistants provide support to individual students and small groups in a variety of ways.

In the primary grades, Lexington Elementary uses the Burst reading program to provide students with the foundational skills they need so they can begin independent reading successfully. Title I assistants are instrumental in implementing this program. Burst intervention is intended to supplement the literacy instruction for students who need targeted individualized instruction. Once DIBELS testing is completed, Burst uses item-level analysis to calculate each student's proficiency level on specific skills. It then arranges students with similar needs into small groups which allows for student participation and significant student and teacher interaction. Student groups are instructed daily and progress monitored every seven to ten days and adjusted accordingly.

In the intermediate grades, tutors are in classrooms where teachers utilize them in various ways for core curriculum interventions. They are used primarily to target low-achieving students in both small group and individual skill instruction. However, high ability and average students also benefit from their presence when classrooms are conducting literature circles and special projects.

Teachers at Lexington Elementary approach Response to Intervention (RTI) as early as possible to identify students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI process begins with teachers screening children and providing interventions to increase their rate of learning. Progress is monitored regularly, and the results are evaluated by a team who directs educational decisions concerning general education and special education. Communication with parents is critical throughout the entire process.

All students in kindergarten are screened for high ability. Throughout their elementary career, students may be reevaluated upon parent or teacher request. The high ability coaches and counselors from each elementary in the district analyze the data to determine eligibility for the program. Although differentiated instruction is implemented in all classrooms, high ability students in the primary classrooms are specifically serviced by the classroom teacher during intervention times. Most classes use student-driven ideas to develop activities, projects, and research to supplement the curriculum being taught to the general population. In addition to ability groups in the intermediate grades, students meet once a week with a high ability coordinator who services all district elementaries. Their time is spent researching topics and developing presentations which they share with their classmates and parents at the end of the semester.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

Data analysis is a vital component to assess student knowledge acquisition. Assessment data is monitored, reviewed, and used to help identify those students in need of intervention. Assessment data also drives instruction, helping teachers design potential focal points of the curriculum.

STAR testing, a component of the Renaissance Accelerated program, provides essential data for teachers in the core areas of mathematics and reading. STAR tests are administered at the beginning of the school year, or when a new student enrolls into the school. STAR results provide a student's grade level ability in both subject areas. This helps identify students in need of intervention or those that can be pushed with high-level curriculum. STAR tests are administered a minimum of three times a year so teachers can use the data to see student growth. Should a student be in need of intervention, STAR tests can be used more frequently to

provide data for RTI purposes.

Newly adopted in 2015, Study Island is another assessment tool to gauge student growth. Study Island provides a breakdown of student achievement in specific academic areas within a core curriculum, such as a student's ability to find main idea or add whole numbers. This allows teachers to assess areas of reading/language arts or mathematics for possible class review or individual intervention.

State standardized testing provides another assessment tool for the school. Testing results are generally returned in time for teachers to plan for the following year. The assessment data from state testing enables identification of those students who may need instructional assistance in the following year. Many intervention strategies focus on students at or near the state's assessment cut line.

Stakeholders are made aware of the results of each of the assessments administered. State testing results are mailed out to students once they are released from the state, and school totals are published through local media avenues. Parents have access to STAR testing results through the school's website while teachers may also send home paper versions of the results. Study Island results are available to students through the student's Study Island portal.

All of this analysis has helped Lexington maintain a high level of success on state testing. To maintain such success, the staff remains vigilant on using data to continue to identify areas of growth. The school uses the data to set its annual goals to continue improving achievement. The emphasis on continued growth, coupled with the consistent data analysis, helps Lexington reach its lofty standards and maintain its academic standing.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Lexington Elementary prides itself on creating a positive atmosphere of caring and respect for its students. Every aspect of a student's day presents copious amounts of opportunities for positive reinforcement and support. This is done through a blend of principal-led programs, teacher-led clubs, and school wide initiatives.

A typical day at Lexington Elementary begins with announcements. Included in these are the Project Words of Wisdom. These student-led readings cover motivational ideals, such as being kind to others or giving your best effort, and are designed to set a supportive tone for the day. A minute of silence follows the Words of Wisdom, allowing time for quiet student reflection before beginning the day's activities.

As students pass through the day, Lexington's imaginative and inviting decorations help maintain the upbeat nature of the announcements. Lexington adopts a yearly theme to coincide with the school's Accelerated Reader program. The decorations found throughout the building reflect that theme. Centered around that theme is a main bulletin board where students can see the school's progress toward its annual reading objective.

Celebration plays a significant role in Lexington's supportive culture. Students earn rewards for reaching particular reading levels. These range from pencils or sitting next to a friend to being assistant principal for a day. Classrooms hold grading period parties for reaching academic goals. Also at the end of each grading period, students that earn their reading goals attend a school-wide goal party. These parties include treats, games, and even DJs to aide in the celebration.

Extra-curricular activities help provide a well-rounded experience for all students. In addition to the athletic offerings of archery, cheerleading, and basketball, students can choose from a host of clubs to join. Student council is an active group providing support to the community through many special programs such as collecting donations for a local food drive. A new knitting club boasts over 30 members and works on teaching students a lifelong skill. Many of these sports and clubs are run by teachers, reemphasizing the community spirit of the staff and its students.

Collaboration is also a central theme at Lexington. Teachers willingly share information, ideas, and guidance to best help all students in the building, not just the teachers' own interests. Teachers in grades third through fifth have initiated plans to swap classes for particular subjects, helping students by playing to teacher strengths. Furthermore, upper grades work with lower grade students on a buddy program to help the younger students with reading and math.

A support structure exists to provide assistance to teachers as needed while also ensuring that teachers feel valued. A Response to Intervention team helps teachers through the process of implementing interventions for students in need. Teachers are in frequent communication between grade levels to advise on behavioral and academic issues. Staff frequently schedules special meals during lunch that foster a sense of fellowship while the principal often celebrates school achievements during regularly scheduled staff meetings. Annual retreats provide teachers with the chance to focus on yearly school goals in an enjoyable atmosphere. The principal also distributes spirit wear for the staff. Items such as jackets, vests, and t-shirts have helped teachers showcase their pride in the school and community.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Lexington Elementary is both the geographical and cultural hub of the community. Towering over the main square of the town, the school dominates the landscape, making it a natural meeting place for the community. From the moment school starts, parents are strongly encouraged to be an integral part of the education process.

This begins with an open house, where parents get to meet their children's teachers, visit the classrooms, and hear about the school's vision for the year. The opening meeting also invites parents to join the Parent-Teacher Organization. The PTO works as a community-school liaison, setting up school events such as the Fall Festival which brings hundreds of people into the school. The PTO also provides fundraising opportunities. These help the PTO raise funds to provide opportunities to the student that would not normally be financially viable such as new playground equipment and class field trips.

The school also hosts many activities throughout the year to invite community members into the building. Donuts with Dads and Muffins with Moms provide the chance to honor the students' caregivers. Family Reading Nights are planned multiple times a year. These nights provide a hot meal, craft events, and reading time for students and their families.

Several community organizations work with Lexington to provide students with even more opportunities and resources. The Kiwanis Club sponsors the Bringing Up Grades (BUGS) program to encourage third graders to keep improving their academics. The Scott County Hospital provides mini lessons that encourage a healthy lifestyle to fourth and fifth grade students . Both Hanover College and the STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, And Math) initiative provide a day's worth of activities focusing on advanced science concepts. Club 3:16 is a community supported program sponsored by area churches. This afterschool program focuses on Bible scripture and stories while also providing a hot meal.

One of the most important community-school partnerships comes from the Scott County Family YMCA. The YMCA provides a free before and after school program that offers a snack, homework assistance, enrichment activities, and exercise opportunities. The YMCA currently boasts an enrollment of nearly 50 percent of the Lexington student population.

Though the school only houses kindergarten through fifth grades, Lexington keeps one eye on the future by emphasizing the importance of a college education. College Go Week provides materials to show both students and their caregivers the value of higher education. Career days are planned to highlight an array of employment opportunities and ties in the education required for such a job.

3. Professional Development:

As technology and trends continuously shape the landscape of education, Lexington remains at the forefront of innovation by providing its staff with prudent, current professional development. Lexington teachers not only engage in their own training, but also share their knowledge and experience through other professional development opportunities.

Much of the professional development available to the staff is offered within the district. With the district's adoption of one to one technology in the classroom, the district initiated a professional development conference called Digipalooza to bring in the best ideas for education in the digital age. At this annual event, teachers from all over Southern Indiana come to provide best practices on technology and education. Lexington staff attends these sessions, but many Lexington teachers also present their own lessons during the two day event.

All teachers attend quarterly grade level curriculum meetings. These district-wide meetings focus on the sequencing, materials, and themes essential to quality instruction. Teachers use the plan formulated during these meetings to drive classroom instruction. Staff treat the curriculum plan as a living document, adjusting and editing the document as better methods arise.

The district professional development team also focuses on instructing teachers on the SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition) method for technology instruction. All Lexington teachers are trained on the SAMR method and encouraged to integrate the practices into their own classroom instruction.

Some teachers also attend conferences across the nation in a wealth of subjects. Teachers from Lexington have presented at technology and national history conferences. Teachers who attend conferences, whether

as presenters or attendees, return to share the knowledge gained with fellow staff members. Several have gone on to present their findings at Digipalooza as well.

Lexington also has its own in-house professional development model. The Lexington School Improvement Committee meets regularly to discuss school vision, best practices, education trends, and works diligently to maintain Lexington's high expectations through yearly goals. The committee provides appropriate professional development to staff on aspects specific to Lexington's areas of focus. The committee also evaluates its plans and monitors the progress of school goals to adjust professional development as needed.

In addition to academic areas, Lexington also emphasizes professional development to help improve school safety. Several members of staff maintain CPR and MERT training. The school maintains a School Safety Team to help establish protocols to use in case of emergencies as well as preventive measures to ensure the safety of the students.

4. School Leadership:

With a relatively small staff population, the importance of filling leadership roles is vitally important to maintain a productive school environment. The leadership of the school begins with the principal, but opportunities to lead are prevalent. Many teachers willingly accept leadership roles for the betterment of the school.

Our administrator's leadership philosophy revolves around the belief that teachers are most successful when they are provided with the resources and support to effectively provide quality instruction. The principal provides the framework for teachers to succeed while maintaining the expectations that the teachers will follow through on the school's vision and goals. From there, the principal delegates responsibility to members of the staff. All staff members are given leadership opportunities in a given year. Several volunteer for multiple roles as needed.

Our administrator's leadership is evident in many areas of the school community. The principal leads staff meetings, the school improvement committee, and special ad hoc groups as needs arise. The principal also takes on an active leadership role in the community as a leader on the preschool board and as an elected official of the city council.

Delegation is an important part of the leadership philosophy of the school. With so many tasks at hand, the principal relies on teachers to fill leadership areas. The teachers respond by playing a pivotal leadership role through their involvement in particular focus groups. Teachers lead professional development, curriculum meetings, PTO advisory boards, and other academic support areas. Teachers meet frequently with the principal to discuss the findings and direction of committee conversations. Leadership for teachers extends well beyond the academic arena. Teachers volunteer as athletic coaches, lead extracurricular groups, and participate in community clubs.

The impact of the diversity of leadership at Lexington Elementary is reflected in the academic achievements of the students. Fostering relationships within the community has helped bring community experts into Lexington to discuss topics relevant to school curricula. It has also enabled Lexington Elementary to attract the support of area businesses to provide resources used to benefit the students. As teachers buy into their leadership roles, their understanding of the school's vision grows. That translates into a knowledgeable staff that understands the need for rigorous instruction in the classroom.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The unanimous belief among staff at Lexington Elementary is that the emphasis on reading as a means to maximize achievement for students is of the utmost importance. LES adopted the Accelerated Reader program as the cornerstone of our reading incentive structure because of the students' familiarity with the program.

The Accelerated Reader program tests reading comprehension. Students select books on their reading level which is determined by a STAR Reading Test and by the teacher. Once they read their books independently, they take a test on their iPad. Students earn points based on the length and reading level of each book. They are retested periodically with the STAR Test, and their reading levels are adjusted based upon individual growth. With guidance from their teachers, all students in first through fifth grades set AR goals each quarter. The program tracks each student's progress, with students commonly achieving more than a year of growth in a school year.

The STAR program provides a Student Diagnostic Report to provide information on each student's percent of skill mastery. A ZPD level is suggested which allows the student to choose books that are challenging but can be read without frustration. Based upon their scores, strategies to promote growth are recommended to incorporate into a personalized reading plan. These reports are instrumental in meeting the needs of all students. They are used widely for RTI and can be utilized to challenge high ability students.

To motivate students, AR points accumulate throughout the year which are used for a variety of privileges and AR parties. Tokens based on AR performance are awarded to classrooms and displayed on school-wide thematic bulletin boards in the hallway. A school-wide point goal is announced at the beginning of the year, and every AR point earned counts toward the goal total. The grand prize is a movie trip to a nearby theatre on the last day of school.

Using the AR program with fidelity has allowed our school to consistently achieve high scores on the state IREAD-3 and ISTEP+ standardized tests. Our scores have historically been above both state and corporation averages. According to Indiana's Growth Model Data, Lexington was classified as low growth, low achievement in 2010 with 39.5 % median growth. The percent of students with a passing score was 73.3%. For five of the past six years, we have been designated high achievement, high growth. For the 2014-2015 school year, we showed 71.5% median growth with 87.2% of students passing the Language Arts portion of the ISTEP+ test, which qualified us for high achievement, high growth for the third consecutive year.