

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

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Jay Dale

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

Official School Name Pisgah Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1495 Pisgah Highway

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Candler State NC Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 28715-9023

County Buncombe County

Telephone (828) 670-5023 Fax (828) 667-9357

Web site/URL http://www.buncombe.k12.nc.us/Domain/2178 E-mail jeanann.yates@bcsemail.org

Facebook Page

https://www.facebook.com/PisgahElementarySch

Twitter Handle ool 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\*Mr. Tony Baldwin E-mail tony.baldwin@bcsemail.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Buncombe County Tel. (828) 232-4160

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. Max Queen  
(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

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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. 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

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

### DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 27 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 7 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 9 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 43 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
  - 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	20	16	36
1	11	18	29
2	20	21	41
3	21	20	41
4	21	20	41
5	20	20	40
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>	113	115	228

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 0 % Asian
  - 3 % Black or African American
  - 6 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 89 % White
  - 1 % 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: 14%

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, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	17
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	16
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	33
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	228
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.145
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	14

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %  
5 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):  
Spanish, Russian

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 72 %  
Total number students who qualify: 173

8. Students receiving special education services: 15 %  
36 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 14
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	12
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	13
Paraprofessionals	7
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 18:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

<b>Required Information</b>	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	96%	97%	95%	97%	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.

<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.

Students are challenged through meaningful contexts, problem solving and life applicable experiences to acquire knowledge and skills to become adaptable, lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

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

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We refer to our school as the Pisgah Family. Our small size allows a close rapport with students and families. Staff knows most students and families by name. Pisgah is a rural, K-5, Title 1 elementary school of 240 students. Our population is defined by a low socioeconomic level with two-thirds receiving help with daily meals and many taking home weekend snacks through our backpack program. One-third of our families receive holiday assistance provided by staff and community partners, and sadly around four percent of our students are homeless. For years, Pisgah was considered a community school where generations of families attended and supported common educational goals. In recent years, the student population has become more transient and families have been adversely affected by economic conditions, which in turn, has impacted the educational setting in a variety of ways. Red flags, such as lack of basic skills, reduced parental involvement, and increased behavioral issues have been observed. There are few economic opportunities in our community as most jobs are tourism or service related. Parent education creates challenges with only twenty percent attaining a college degree. Students from single-parent homes struggle with resources due to our rural setting and few government or business partners to provide recreational, financial or volunteer support. Most of our kindergarteners lack preschool experience and skills with less than half showing readiness according to screening. There is an average number of Exceptional Children (EC), however a low percentage of students qualify as Academically Intellectually Gifted (AIG). Despite these challenges, our students are able to grow and maintain higher than expected academic growth with the support of our diligent, talented and compassionate staff.

Our school, built in 1951, originally served students in K-8, when two small community schools merged. During these years, Pisgah excelled in sports, square dancing, and essay contests. We remained K-8 until 1986 when the middle school model was born. Pisgah was renovated and upgraded in 2001 and again in 2005. Next year, with the opening of a new 5-6 Intermediate School, Pisgah will become K-4. Nestled at the foot of Mt. Pisgah, our thirteen-acre campus has continually enhanced learning through our wetland/outdoor classroom, creek, fitness trail, extensive playground equipment, picnic areas, and ball fields. After school opportunities have been available for students for many years. The school continues to be a center of the community through use of the facility for soccer, baseball and basketball teams; families are seen celebrating birthdays in the picnic area. A traditionally generous spirit within our community and staff assists charitable organizations and helps needy Pisgah families and staff members in difficult circumstances. For the past ten years, Pisgah has been recognized as a High-Performance School, on standardized state tests. Scoring among the top percentiles for the past few years, we are leaders in our district. Another significant milestone is our recognition as a National Title I Distinguished School for the past two years.

Challenges aside, Pisgah continues to enjoy a positive climate. Each morning, students and staff recite the Pledge of Allegiance and our “Pisgah Promise” which emphasizes our core beliefs. Students are recognized throughout the year for positive and respectful behavior, from walking correctly in the hallway to riding the bus safely and all areas in between. Pisgah Pride Tickets are given to students to be traded at the Pisgah School Store for rewards, such as lunch with a friend or reading with a book buddy. To continue to strengthen the climate and culture of the school, display boards are mounted in the front hall to highlight student and staff achievements. In the area of academics, the recently (2013-14) implemented Intervention Block Schedule has proven successful in coordinating Title I, EC, Tutoring, and Enrichment times to allow for in-depth content area opportunities. Academic achievement is also recognized by awarding Pisgah Pride Tickets, and celebrated during our Friendship Assembly programs, as well as on Awards Day.

High expectations and academic rigor are hallmarks of our school, but many students lack experiences, background, and connections to the world; we provide activities to enrich. Learning is enhanced through numerous field trips, tutoring opportunities and clubs, such as Destination Imagination, Impact Club, and DirtWorks. During the day, Friendship Assemblies, Career Days, Ecology Week, and World Culture Day challenge students to meet their full academic and social potential. Parents and grandparents support our school by participating and leading programs and initiatives such as our Community Garden. Our grant funded guidance counselor provides student leadership opportunities such as “Serve Our School” (SOS) Club and “Pennies for Patients” team. Roadrunner Bookstore is manned completely by fourth and fifth

graders, and our media specialist trains a team of students to set up technology for school-wide programs. Trout Club students take initiative each morning to test water quality and care for the tank with minimal adult supervision. Pisgah is a family.

## PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Core Curriculum:

Expectations build from kindergarten through fifth grade and are based on the NC State Standards (NCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA). Standards follow a progression toward College and Career Readiness. ELA NCSS integrate reading, writing, speaking, listening and language. Integrating strands to create rich tasks for students addresses several standards at once. The Unpacking document elaborates upon standards students must know, understand and do, facilitating discussion among Literacy Team members to encourage cohesion from kindergarten up.

Access to high-quality books is essential for our literacy work. Our media center meets standards for the number of recommended per pupil books. Through grants, Pisgah has prioritized funding to strengthen our Media Center and classroom libraries. To encourage independent reading we utilize Accelerated Reading (AR), an incentive program in which students read books and take comprehension tests. Students earn points to attend reward events such as making musical instruments with professional musicians.

At-risk students are targeted through an Intervention Block (IB) for one hour daily for ELA and one hour weekly for mathematics. Students are grouped by skill need and level. For example, a group of third graders needing fluency work focus on Readers Theater, while another group focuses on a specific comprehension skill. During our Professional Learning Communities (PLC) we look at formative and summative data to form groups in both literacy and mathematics. Students are offered free math and reading tutoring after school by teachers two days per week. A specialist serves our gifted students two days per week, integrating activities such as circuit boards and stock market games.

Mathematical power is “an individual’s ability to explore, conjecture, and reason logically, as well as the ability to use a variety of mathematical methods effectively to solve non-routine problems.” (NCTM, 1989) We emphasize mathematical reasoning, problem-solving, and communication from kindergarten through fifth grade. We want students to experience mathematics as a creative, sense-making venture of solving challenging, real-world problems individually and collaboratively. We expect students to develop in all strands of mathematical proficiency – conceptual understanding, procedural and computational fluency, strategic competence and reasoning. Development of number sense and insight into patterns and relationships that lead to computational and symbolic fluency are essential for effective problem solvers. Computational fluency includes accuracy, efficiency, and flexibility. Our learning environment is focused on worthwhile problematic tasks and meaningful discourse. We are in the learning business, and ultimately what matters most in classrooms is what is going on in the minds of our students relative to the mathematics at hand. Instructional decisions and interventions are driven by formative assessment data and teachers’ insight into students’ mathematical thinking.

In addition to integrating science with ELA and Mathematics, we believe students should be engaged in experiential learning of Science. Core concepts drawn from physical, earth and life science are based on our NCSS. Trout Club raises trout from eggs to release in our stream and facilitates learning for the school through visitors from the NC State Science House and Trout Unlimited. Blue Ridge Parkway Rangers and Buncombe County Soil and Water partner with teachers, utilizing our outdoor classroom and wetland area. Our new Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) lab allows us to engage students in hands-on, inquiry-based instruction, critical to conceptual understanding of science content. An AmeriCorps worker supports teachers by setting up materials in the STEM lab, facilitating the use of interactive learning for students.

Our social studies program prepares students to be active, informed, and responsible citizens. Through individual and group inquiry students examine a broad range of peoples and cultures. One school-wide activity is World Culture Day when students learn and present information about different countries around the world. Students engage in hands on activities, tasting food from other cultures, and learning about daily life in other countries from high school and college foreign exchange students. They learn about problems at the local, state, national, and global levels. The five organizational strands of the social studies program-



history, geography, civics and government, economics and financial literacy, and culture are addressed with increasing rigor at each grade level. Career Day provides glimpses into all strands of the social studies program. The Mountain Heritage Center staff visits with lessons and artifacts to bring history alive.

## 2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Learning in the arts nurtures active engagement, disciplined and sustained attention, persistence, and risk-taking. It also encourages creativity, improves problem-solving skills, and facilitates working within a large group of students to accomplish a goal. In our school, music and visual arts classes are provided by specialists for fifty-five minutes per week. Upper grade students are thrilled to learn to play recorders. Specialists weave literature into their lessons and integrate other content areas. They also support school enhancement programs such as World Culture Day. Students display visual arts pieces in our school and a district wide art exhibit. Each year, two students are chosen to receive the Principal's Art Award. Their artwork is displayed at Pisgah until they graduate from high school. Our students also have the opportunity to participate in after school activities such as yarn club. Students perform for school assemblies and PTO events. Every year grade levels select a topic based on a Science or Social Studies theme to create a school-wide presentation. For example, fourth graders presented a science program on Rocks and Minerals, writing a script and learning poetry on the topic with classroom teachers, learning songs with our music specialist, and creating props with our art specialist.

In physical education, psychomotor or movement skills are taught by our specialist in weekly fifty-five minutes classes. Classroom teachers provide daily recess for thirty minutes. Research supports that healthy, active, fit children perform better academically, so keeping students safe, healthy, and ready to learn is our primary responsibility. Brain Gym, GoNoodle, and other energizers are routinely used in the classroom. In health education, there is a major focus on critical thinking skills, such as decision making, communication, and goal setting. Knowledge in itself does not change behavior; learning and practicing skills promotes the adoption of learning into daily life.

Each class is scheduled in our computer lab twice weekly for a fifty-five minute mix of Lexia Core Reading lessons, enrichment, and project-based learning. Lexia Core provides explicit, systematic, personalized learning in all areas of reading instruction. It is designed to specifically meet NCSS. Students who meet weekly time goals based on a placement skills assessment go on to work on independent projects that correlate with current ELA, math, science and social studies units of study. In addition to the lab, each classroom has at least two internet accessible computers, a teaching station laptop, data projector, and SMARTboard. Teachers were trained to incorporate SMARTboard activities that engage learners in a multi-sensory manner. Three sets of ipad classroom carts and three classroom sets of laptops are available to checkout for digital learning. Students use ipads to read eBooks, practice foundational literacy skills, instructional games and activities during learning center time. Our fourth and fifth graders utilize one-on-one devices resulting in seamless access to technology and integration of the core subjects. For example, fourth graders viewed Discovery Education videos and investigated online links to learn about the water cycle, engaged in a hands-on activity using Enviroscope, and then created posters to enter in the Buncombe County Soil and Water contest.

## 3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

In addition to the curriculum and instructional measures mentioned, our staff explicitly plans and reflects on teaching and learning, scheduling additional activities that ensure objectives and needs have been met. Our IB schedule is designed to meet student needs through remediation and enrichment. Tier 2 and 3 students receive differentiated instruction through personalized schedules to close the achievement gap. Pull-out instruction and inclusion models are done to best meet student needs. These students receive support through both Title I and Exceptional Children staff.

In ELA, Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) is used school-wide to target student needs. LLI is a researched based program that uses the Continuum of Literacy Learning to supplement classroom instruction and target the five components of literacy through small group instruction. A strong literacy foundation is built in grades K-3 through the implementation of LetterLand, a multi-sensory, researched based program that

teaches literacy skills. Students are grouped and instructed on phonics skills based on assessed needs. Students who continue to exhibit gaps with phonics in grades third-fifth use Cracking the Code to reinforce decoding strategies. The Junior Great Books Program is used within leveled small groups to provide shared inquiry opportunities for all students. Intensive tutoring by master teachers is provided for struggling second-fifth students in literacy, math, and science during the school day and after school.

Technology also plays a key role in differentiation. In addition to the classroom technology mentioned above, students engage in leveled online activities through the MobyMax digital program to accelerate ELA reading skills, vocabulary, math fluency, mathematical content, and science skills. Programs such as FrontRow and Raz-Kids used to provide leveled text and support comprehension skills based on science and social studies content.

Technology is also used to reinforce mathematical skills and standards based on student achievement. Students participate in Investigations in Data, Space and Number Mathematics program which encourages them to be mathematical thinkers. Students are able to investigate multiple strategies to solve computations building a mathematical foundation. Kathy Richardson's Math Perspectives Program is used in K-2 classrooms to enrich and remediate skills. Motivation Math is used in grades third-fourth to foster critical thinking and teach effective problem solving skills.

In science, Pisgah's STEM lab utilizes inquiry based activities and manipulatives to engage students who may otherwise be uninterested or confused with a read only approach to science learning. This is a space created to blend hands-on with technology and text to bring all abilities of learners to the table.

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

We use a variety of assessment data to analyze and improve student performance. The mCLASS assessment is a comprehensive K-3 literacy assessment. Professional Learning Communities (PLC) drill down mCLASS data three times yearly to develop reading intervention groups based on levels and needs, providing explicit instruction in specific areas. Fourth and fifth grade Tier 2 and 3 students are also assessed using mCLASS. End of Grade test data in Reading, Math and Science is used to determine which students are performing on, above, or below grade level. We use this information to instructionally target high, average and low achieving students in order to maximize their educational growth. Lexia Core delivers norm-referenced performance data and analysis. It provides teachers with data-driven action plans to differentiate instruction. Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark data in Reading is used to assess fourth and fifth grade students' reading achievement. This data can be broken down into fluency, decoding, writing and oral comprehension. It is also used to identify areas in which students excel or have deficits in order to capitalize on strengths and fortify weaknesses during instruction. State Math Assessments break down students' ability to problem solve based on each strand of the standards. The information gathered informs teachers about which standards have been mastered and which need to be reinforced. Student Writing Portfolios consist of independently written narrative, informational, and opinion based writings, and state rubrics pinpoint student needs. Direct instruction and mini lessons in writing are provided as needed.

Parents, students and the community are regularly informed of students' academic achievement. Parents and students have access to the Parent Portal to regularly check grades on each assignment and attendance. The school "report card", which provides our school "grade" based on test scores, is released by the state and available on the school website each year. Parents are encouraged to attend conferences with their child's teacher. Parents of children who are identified as "at risk" conference with teachers at least three times yearly. Students are encouraged to maintain high levels of achievement. High performing students are recognized at school-wide assemblies for achieving honor roll status and for reaching reading goals. Families are invited to celebrate their accomplishments with us.

## **PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Pisgah motivates and engages students through diverse initiatives. Students are recognized at Friendship Assemblies for excellence in reading, overall academics, and citizenship. Our Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) is fully implemented this year. Our PBIS provides a framework of common language by staff for school-wide expectations of proper behavior. We reward students for attendance, attitude, and academic success with the Remarkable Roadrunner Award, followed by tangibles such as ice cream floats, dances, or movie and popcorn. Pisgah Pride tickets are awarded to students to positively reinforce individual and group behavior. Through PBIS we have a Golden Tray Award where top behaving classes win a decorated cafeteria table for appropriate month long excellence in the cafeteria. Staff members nominate positively behaving students as Rock Stars weekly. Those names are made known and celebrated during school-wide announcements. Our school resource officer is not just a safety officer for our school, but a positive role model in our school, reading aloud to classes or visiting recess, so when situations arise he has a relationship with the students.

Our counselor leads individual and group counseling in addition to classroom lessons. She also meets with parents and is involved in parent-teacher conferences. She has implemented programs to support our students academically, socially, and emotionally. One major initiative is the Serve Our Schools Club. This club enables students to participate in a variety of leadership positions. Students open doors, monitor hallways, supervise breakfast, and assist younger students with morning routines. Students run our morning bookstore and book buddy with children in younger grades. We have a school-wide judged Science Fair that showcases students' scientific inquiry. Students are involved in the Destination Imagination program. This global program encourages creativity, prop design, research, and teamwork to complete a particular challenge. Our school team has qualified and competed in the global finals the last seven years.

Staff members nominate faculty who demonstrate outstanding leadership and teamwork; each month a name is randomly drawn and announced. Our Parent-Teacher Organization provides the winners with a gift card. Our PTO honors our staff with a Teacher Appreciation Week by hosting a lunch and various activities throughout the year. Staff feels valued and supported by our parents, community and leadership. Teachers are given time to collaborate, feel they are in a safe environment, receive support with discipline, and are recognized as educational experts. We make the important educational decisions and solve problems in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Community partnerships create shared vision with stakeholders and increase knowledge and enhance academic performance. We partner with local churches to meet student needs. These churches generously contribute snacks for our after-school tutoring and provide food bags for our indigent students. We sponsor an annual can drive for needy families. Students raise money for Eblen charities on thematic dress up days. Our school resource officer and staff members provide a holiday banquet for our most impoverished families. Students this year are raising money for children with leukemia and lymphoma.

The POP Project (Power of Possibility) donates books for class and home libraries, birthday books, preschoolers, and Roadrunners' Bookstore. On Young Author's Day students share writing with their families. Friendship Assembly performances deepen content understanding and parent connections. A Summer Reading Program with rewards decreases reading loss. A Kindergarten Summer Picnic welcomes families and increases involvement. Parents Power Down encourages parents to turn off technology and read aloud. Parent-Teacher Compacts promote growth vs. fixed mindset as students hear stories of people who persevere through our "I Can, I Wanna" program.

Community members and families partner with us in fundraisers such as spaghetti dinners and doughnut sales. Our Friendship Assemblies are well attended by family and community members. Pisgah participates with several local restaurants to have Pisgah Spirit Nights, which helps raise money for our school,

encourages the community, and bolsters the local economy.

Pisgah provides unique environmental learning and fitness opportunities for students and the community, building rich minds and bodies, while increasing academic content and vocabulary. As a Green School, we meet vigorous environmental criteria. Partnering with Asheville GreenWorks, our fitness trail is equipped with physical activity stations for students and the community. Recess Club meets weekly to encourage a healthy lifestyle including fitness and nutrition. Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation provided grants to create an Outdoor Environmental Learning Center, wetland habitat, and teacher education. DirtWorks Garden Club offers campus beautification. Trout Club, sponsored by Land O' Sky Trout Unlimited, provides support and lessons to maintain tank and water quality-- raising trout from eggs to release in our local stream.

Career Day brings in community members to offer glimpses into future job opportunities. High school and universities participate and also enable fifth graders to visit campuses. Pisgah is dedicated to broadening the worldview of our students to the needs and opportunities outside our small community.

### 3. Professional Development:

Committed to the growth of our students, we evaluate impact of instruction through analysis of data, participate in professional development and collaborate with broader learning communities. At district PLC meetings, data was analyzed to target student needs. Grade level, Title 1, and EC PLC collaboration focused on deficits in student achievement and implemented small group interventions. Third-fifth reading scores were 75% passing compared to 56% state, 56% district.

Teachers attended the State Reading Conference and Writing about Reading to increase reading comprehension. District Literacy team met for two years focusing on the 90-minute literacy block, sharing with staff. LetterLand workshops attended by teachers, assistants and instructional coach, created fidelity of implementation. Junior Great Books, a shared inquiry program, was implemented in 2012. K-2, EC and Title I representatives attend ongoing LLI training. 83% of our kindergarten students met or exceeded grade level expectations measured by mClass. The two year average of third grade reading EOG scores increased from 40% pass rate for BOG to 81%.

For two years, teachers participated in Math and Reading Foundations training sponsored by the NC School Improvement Project to assist Tier 2 and 3 students in literacy and math. Representatives attended quarterly district math meetings, where teams examined data and best practices and aligned curriculum with NCSS. Two-year average third-fifth math EOG scores are 80% compared to 54% state and 56% district. Extensive training on NCSS Mathematics enabled teachers to fine-tune existing math programs to exceed standards. These discussions led to searches for additional materials that supplement or fill in gaps of existing instructional programs including Khan Academy, Singapore Bar Model and constructivist strategies. A team of five will attend the National Math Conference in San Francisco, California.

The Educational Workforce Innovation Fund allowed fourth and fifth grade teachers to attend district science workshops to increase understanding of NCSS and provided new materials and inquiry-based strategies. In addition, the principal and instructional coach attended North Carolina New Schools Break Through Learning training. These initiatives helped increase science content knowledge for students and staff. Our fifth grade science scores were 87% compared to 62% state and 64% district.

Intensive training to incorporate digital learning into content was provided to upper grade teachers. This initiative impacts all grades, as laptops and ipads are now available for younger students and teachers are helping teachers seamlessly weave digital learning into everyday instruction. In fact, students themselves are taking more ownership of learning and becoming facilitators for others.

#### 4. School Leadership:

Our principal fosters freedom of ownership, innovation, teamwork, and a positive esprit de corps. The philosophy of hands-off management is seen in the hallways, in the committees, in every facet of the school. Our main committee, the School Improvement Team, is staffed with a teacher from every grade level. Our monthly meetings are open and honest. All staff is encouraged to send concerns or ideas to a SIT member or to attend the meeting, even if they are not an official member. This transparency and open structure is one of the reasons our school has great camaraderie and unity. Staff is encouraged to create, modify, delete, and suggest in all areas of the school, and they do so with professionalism and enthusiasm.

Our principal trusts his staff on minor and major issues to ensure student achievement. The school's lead teachers take on numerous responsibilities. Some examples of the effect of this trust are weekly PLC meetings to diagnose successes and deficiencies and help drive instruction in our school. Our budget committee, consisting of certified and noncertified staff, work together to ensure that local funding is allocated in the most efficient manner to meet the needs of our school. Our Advisory Council (elected community members and staff) meets monthly to advise and discuss matters pursuant to our school. The Media Technology Advisory Committee (MTAC) serves to strengthen the media and technology program and in turn strengthen the total instructional program in the school. In order to support teachers and students more effectively, we are beginning a problem-solving team focused on student behavioral issues. This will assist us in tracking successes and failures in our behavior plan. Trained staff members meet and review individual cases to assist the teacher with possible solutions.

Our principal encourages staff members to visit other high performing schools in neighboring districts for collaboration and exploration. Innovative ideas noted from this visit are shared with all staff. Our principal encourages teachers to brainstorm ways to enhance student achievement, and pushes teachers to apply for grants from all sources, and particularly our primary community stakeholder, Biltmore Lake Foundation. These grants have yielded SmartBoards, laptops, laptop carts, Ipads, a completely furnished STEM lab, and an updated library collection. These annual grants, written by our media specialist in collaboration with staff, are for approximately \$10,000 each, and these resources have enhanced our student achievement a great deal.

## Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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Our school recites our promise daily, “At Pisgah Elementary we are a family of learners. We respect and care about each other. We are safe and responsible students. This is who we are, even when no-one is watching.”

This promise summarizes the key socio-emotional component of Pisgah’s success and identity- we are a tight knit school and community. With only one hallway, teachers, support staff, and students interact daily and create a close rapport, openness, and unity among all. As each kindergarten student steps through our doors, every staff member becomes vested in that child. From that moment forward it is our mission that every child succeed. We know the names of our students, as well as their unique gifts and specific challenges. We find out something about their background, their likes and dislikes. We connect with students and make sure each one knows that Pisgah is a place where they can say, ‘I am special, I am loved,’ and as in the once popular TV show “Cheers” proclaims- “a place where everybody knows your name.” We do not feel that students belong to any one specific teacher; every student belongs to all. Our support personnel is second to none, and includes five retired master teachers who continue to nourish our family of learners, remediating and enriching students in small groups.

School days at Pisgah may be the only structure and stability that many of our children experience. By wrapping each student in this cocoon of caring we become not only the teacher, but parent, counselor, coach, and mentor. This feeling of belonging, undergirded by our extremely high expectations, helps almost every child reach grade level by the time the last day of fifth grade arrives.

Teachers are empowered to make caring and capable decisions, as staff at Pisgah are recognized as educational experts and problem solvers. Teachers are able to impact our students’ lives in an atmosphere of trust and mutual regard. Respect exists among colleagues, leadership, students and community. We are relentless in the belief that our students can and will excel despite any obstacles they face outside of our walls. By being that rock, that common ground, that strong foundation, our students thrive at every turn. It is this simple student-staff connection that we are most proud. We know what to do, and we care enough to do it. That is how we find success.