U.S. Department of Education
2017 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 13881 Hopkins Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Germantown   State MD   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 20874-6111

County   Montgomery County

Telephone (301) 353-0854   Fax   (301) 353-0964

Web site/URL
            http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.
org/schools/ronaldmcnaires/   E-mail   Sherilyn_R_Moses@mcpsmd.org

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

_____Date_____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Dr. Jack Smith   E-mail Jack_Smith@mcpsmd.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Montgomery County School District   Tel.   (301) 309-6277
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. Michael Durso
(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. 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 and all subgroups, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.

3. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2017 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.

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 2011 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: 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, or 2016.

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 has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

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.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2016-2017) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district   133 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   39 Middle/Junior high schools
                                        26 High schools
                                        6 K-12 schools

                                        204 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
   [X] 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, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	16	7	23
K	83	59	142
1	59	76	135
2	62	68	130
3	75	74	149
4	73	65	138
5	85	71	156
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	453	420	873

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
- 30 % Asian
- 25 % Black or African American
- 17 % Hispanic or Latino
- 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- 21 % White
- 7 % 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 2015 – 2016 school year: 8%

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, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	45
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	26
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	71
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	842
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.084
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	8

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 16 %

139 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Amharic, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Creole/Pidgin, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Hungarian, Korean, Nepali, Oromo, Oriya, Persian, Pilipino, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Sinhalese, Slovak, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, Twi, Urdu, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 27 %

Total number students who qualify: 235

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %

63 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.

4	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	11	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	18	Specific Learning Disability
1	Emotional Disturbance	16	Speech or Language Impairment
0	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
0	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	Multiple Disabilities	13	Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: <u>4</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	2
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects	35
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	17
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	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>25:1</u>

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

Required Information	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	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 2016.

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.

We are dedicated to inspire all students to reach their fullest potential by working collaboratively to provide the most effective instruction and support.

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

Ronald McNair Elementary School, located in Germantown, Maryland, opened its doors in 1990. Currently, it is home to 873 students and 85 staff members, and a proud recipient of the Maryland Blue Ribbon.

Germantown is located in Montgomery County, Maryland, approximately 25 miles outside of Washington D.C. and 50 miles from Baltimore. Due to the school's location in Germantown, students are able to go on field trips to the National Zoo, Maryland Science Center, Baltimore Aquarium, Mount Vernon, and several parks and nature centers. The multitude of field trip opportunities enriches the learning experience for our students and builds schema. Germantown is the third most populous location in Maryland and has rapidly grown since the building of McNair. As a result, the building itself is overcapacity and six portable classrooms have been added for classroom use.

The population of Germantown is very diverse and this diversity is represented in the McNair student body. Our population includes 30% Asian, 25% Black or African American, 17% Hispanic or Latino, 21% White, and 7% Two or more races. Additionally, 16% of the student population are English Language Learners (ELL), speaking 31 different languages, and 27% of students are eligible for free and reduced meals (FARMS). The 2016-2017 school year is the first year in history that the percentage of white students is not the highest or second highest in the school. Our FARMS students have also steadily increased over time.

Of our diverse population, 14% of the students receive Special Education services through a Home-School Model. We are fortunate to have this structure at our school because it allows neighborhood children who would otherwise be sent to surrounding schools to remain with their peers. Typically, special education students who require significant hours of service from special educators and related service providers are not able to remain in their home school due to limited staffing. At Ronald McNair, we are able to support almost all of our community so that they are able to remain at their home school with their neighborhood peers.

Our school mission statement is to inspire all students to reach their fullest potential; as such there are many traditions inherent to McNair. The school sponsors an annual staff Thanksgiving dinner in the week before the actual holiday. This offers current and former staff members a chance to reflect and reminisce over a meal sponsored by the school administration, thus building relationships amongst the staff to strengthen their collaborative efforts to provide the most effective instruction and support for all members of our school community. Parent and community involvement is an important aspect of the culture at McNair. We celebrate our diversity in each classroom with activities such as Star of the Week and Culture Corner, which give students the opportunity to share information about themselves, their families, and their culture. We are fortunate to have a very active Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) which sponsors many events for our students and staff. One of the most anticipated events is the annual International Night. All are invited to share their culture and traditions through food, dress, song and dance. Other annual events include the Back to School Picnic, Ice-Cream Social, Spaghetti Dinner, and Cultural Arts Assemblies, all organized by McNair's PTA. The PTA is committed to ensuring all stakeholders have a voice and take an active role in keeping McNair a place of classroom and community learning and achievement.

McNair offers a variety of instructional programs and supports for students and staff. We are a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) school, which uses positive school-wide disciplinary practices to create a safe learning environment. Additionally, we are a Professional Development School (PDS) partnership with Towson University at the Universities of Shady Grove campus. As a result of the partnership, McNair staff members act as mentors to interns who are placed within the school. This partnership benefits the interns as well as the staff members by improving their professional learning and leadership skills.

Students are also offered a variety of programs to improve all aspects of their lives. Students participate in Jump Rope for Heart, Safety Patrols, SERT, and Girls on the Run. The Student Government Association (SGA) is a group of elected fifth graders who sponsor monthly community service projects and school spirit events. The McNair Morning Show is an opportunity for fourth and fifth grade students to produce and host a televised version of the school's daily announcements. Reading and Technology Buddy Programs have

also been created, pairing upper grade students with younger grades. The older students mentor, model, and help to motivate younger students. These buddy relationships continue to grow over the years. When the fifth graders have their June celebrations, they see their young buddies rooting them on in the end of year "clap-out" ceremony.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Ronald McNair follows Montgomery County Public Schools' Curriculum 2.0, as well as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), to provide the structure for our building's educational program. By incorporating Thinking and Academic Success Skills (TASS) and critical thinking opportunities into each content area, we are able to teach the whole child. As technology in our world progresses, the McNair staff continually engage students in multimedia experiences. Through a variety of professional learning communities and commitment to excellence, all staff members collaborate to ensure the core academic areas are infused with various enrichment activities and provide differentiated instruction to keep students engaged while learning.

The Ronald McNair reading program is MCPS' Curriculum 2.0, which is grounded in the Maryland English Language Arts Content Standards (2008) and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (2010); it focuses on the communication processes of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing through the study of language and literature. McNair's language arts program is designed to provide students with instruction through various reading levels and genres of text to develop comprehension skills. During the 90-minute instructional block, students receive guided reading instruction at their instructional levels, reading strategy support, phonics and word work, vocabulary activities, and follow up based on small group instruction. Typically, whole group instruction consists of a short mini lesson to introduce new strategies and ensure exposure of rigorous grade level materials to all students. The remainder of the block is used for small group instruction where students participate in flexible reading groups based on reading level or individual student needs with specific reading skills. Each marking period students are exposed to multiple informational and narrative texts which vary in complexity, and provide teachers with a rich foundation for vocabulary and comprehension instruction. Written language is also a large component of the language arts program, as students must become flexible thinkers and be able to effectively communicate by both speaking and writing. Each marking period, students participate in inquiry based projects that integrate reading and writing with either science or social studies. Students craft written responses to questions from their reading group, apply note taking and paraphrasing skills when researching topics for informative writing, and share their points of view when expressing an opinion.

We engage all students in experiences with mathematics content and processes that help them reach proficiency. The Ronald McNair mathematics program's foundation is the MCPS Curriculum 2.0 K–5 mathematics framework, the concepts of mathematics are organized under six strands: Counting and Cardinality, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Number and Operations in Base Ten, Number and Operations—Fractions, Measurement and Data, and Geometry. Furthermore, McNair uses the strands of mathematical thinking defined as Understanding, Computing, Applying, Reasoning, and Engaging (UCARE). Through daily, small group instruction, students work to develop a deeper understanding of mathematics rather than the traditional focus on procedural skills. Teachers design activities for students to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, and construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others. Students are required to look for and make use of patterns and structures, and express generalities within mathematics. To meet the needs of all learners, daily lessons include opportunities for scaffolding, enrichment, and acceleration. Beginning in fourth grade, advanced students are offered a compacted math class where students are instructed on three years of curriculum in two school years.

The goal of the Social Studies curriculum is to create historically literate and well-informed citizens who actively participate in a democratic society. Ronald McNair follows MCPS' Curriculum 2.0 and the Maryland Social Studies Content Standards, where students learn about history and how economic and geographical factors helped shape the society we know today. Though multi-media presentations, field trips, historical fiction texts, and informative reading, students use critical thinking skills to determine why changes have been made by individuals or groups of people and the results of those changes. As a school with a diverse population, we are able to incorporate family and community resources to supplement our curriculum. This further prepares students to be active and informed members of society.

The vision of McNair's science program is that all students achieve full STEM literacy through standards referenced, problem/project based instruction to develop critical thinkers who apply scientific and engineering practices to non-routine problems. The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), through MCPS' Curriculum 2.0, are used at McNair. Each science unit encourages collaboration, flexible thinking, and problem solving skills. Students use a variety of hands-on materials to engineer, create, and observe activities based on elements of a well-designed science investigation. Science provides an opportunity to include informative reading skills to build background knowledge and follow procedural text. Investigations also provide students with an opportunity to collect data, analyze results, and formulate a conclusion based on that data.

All staff members at Ronald McNair are invested and committed to the academic and social success of every student. We use the CCSS and Curriculum 2.0 as a guiding foundation, but also plan for the specific needs of our students to increase achievement for all. Pre-K at Ronald McNair is the beginning of school readiness, learning, and growing. We work to ensure that our youngest learners are developing the skills, abilities, and attitudes that will make them successful learners in the years to come. The Pre-K curriculum, A Big Day for PreK, involves a literacy block, a math block, center time and outdoor play. Students are exposed to concepts aligned to the MCPS curriculum for students in K-2 to support student success. Additionally, Pre-K students participate in music, art, physical education, and media lessons. Following the Pre-K experience, students demonstrate a higher level of readiness for participating in the school day.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

The Arts are a vibrant part of the life of McNair students. Students participate weekly for 45-50 minutes in physical education, fine arts, general music, instrumental music and media. Each area follows the Pre-K through Grade 5 MCPS online curriculum, which offers a scope and sequence of increasing rigor and complexity.

General music provides opportunities for students to learn through singing, playing instruments, moving, and analyzing how music is created and composed. At McNair, we provide an all-inclusive chorus experience for 4th and 5th grade. Fifth grade also presents a musical play at the end of the year. Third grade uses the "Recorder Karate" program to learn how to play recorders and enhance their music reading skills. Instrumental Music is offered in 4th and 5th grades for string and band instruments. Select special education students in younger grades participate in Instrumental Music as a positive reward. Our goals are to provide a well-rounded and fun exposure to all styles of music and to create a love for the arts.

In fine arts, our students study master and contemporary artists while learning about cultures and the importance of art as a communication tool throughout history. Students become proficient in various mediums, including ceramics, painting, printmaking, and drawing. Students learn how to think critically and problem solve. Art also helps students with their social and emotional learning. We open the minds of students to new worlds and cultures, enabling students to creatively express themselves and value multiple perspectives of others. McNair students participate in shows, exhibits and contests within our city, county, and state. We even present at the Senate State House in Annapolis. Students celebrate Youth Art Month in March with a school wide Art Activity Night. Students create art with families and friends at this annual event.

Students learn about how exercising helps the heart in their physical education classes, and later put that into action with the American Heart Association's "Jump Rope for Heart" program. This year our school raised over $12,000, besting last year's proceeds by $2,000. Two of our students have themselves benefited from heart research and early intervention, and the school in turn benefitted from hearing their stories. This brought a wonderful tie-in with the larger physical education goals of health and fitness, in addition to the equally important recreational aspects of team and individual sports. The McNair elementary P.E. experience prepares students for team sports at the middle and high school levels. Our school also promotes "Walk to School Day" as well as the Fall and Spring Fitness Challenges, known as "Fire Up Your Feet" where students and staff log their exercise activity, where we ranked 2nd in participation! These activities promote the health and wellness of the larger school population. The anticipated capstone of the year is the school-wide Field Day which features group games that require teamwork and celebrate effort and fun over

competition and individual achievement.

Our media program teaches information literacy while developing a love for reading, both critical for success as a 21st century learner. Print and digital materials are created and evaluated through the concepts of currency, authority, and bias; critical concepts to becoming digitally "Net Smart," and media literate. To encourage a love of reading, we use the Black Eyed Susan program, in which students select the winner from nominated titles. The School Library Media Specialist sees every student every year and is able to build a personal relationship with each child. Students bring their Chromebooks for technology lessons that include web evaluation, presentation skills, and using online products. Students learn keyword searching to find information and use online resources successfully. In addition to their lesson time, students can exchange books during Open Library. The PTA STEM Night features coding in the media center. We run a student-led daily TV Morning show that is broadcast in all classrooms. McNair students also enjoy a variety of clubs including FLES (Foreign Language), Piano, Chess Club, Robotics, Young Rembrandts, and Mad Science. Staff organized the first student led Talent Show, which is a nice complement to our annual International Night, featuring food and families of our diverse school population. Students thrive through the Arts at McNair!

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

At McNair, we use a variety of instructional approaches such as, cooperative inquiry based groups, flexible small groups, and scaffolding of instruction to conduct meaningful teaching. The instructional methods we use include guided reading, paired reading, and graphic organizers. We use an inclusion/co-teaching model, which includes Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to tap into all learning styles, arts integration, multiple intelligence consideration, and social skill groups.

For student enrichment, we use Junior Great Books and/or the William and Mary series. Math scaffolding methods include Moby Math, Ten Marks, Front Row, and Xtra Math. Other interventions we might implement include Fountas & Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Intervention, Readability, Read & Write, Read Naturally, Early Interventions in Reading, and Number Worlds. Behavior needs are addressed through Class Dojo, social skills groups, check in/out, flash passes, token towers, and behavior contracts.

Students are consistently assessed in order to maintain our high expectations. MIRL (Measurements of Instructional Reading Levels), informal assessments, observations, and pre-tests are an integral part of our daily instruction. We track student progress by collecting, monitoring, analyzing, and discussing a myriad of data with multiple stakeholders. We use online data collection tools such as our monthly reading monitoring assessment tool (MIRL) and the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). Students are given Elementary Mathematic Assessment Tasks (EMAT) quarterly to record their progress on specific indicators. After student data has been collected and analyzed, we re-group students based on their needs. Collaborative team planning takes place weekly. Staff discuss student data and share strategies on how to support or enrich students' learning progressions.

Throughout the year, classroom teachers participate in individual and team data chat meetings with the CORE team (consisting of administration, staff development teacher, reading specialist, and counselor) to discuss trends and identify actions to support students. We focus on the students who are identified as "at risk" for not meeting specified benchmarks. This is based on the Early Warning Indicators (EWI), which looks at ethnicity, FARMS, attendance, behavior, course work, and mobility. Additionally, we look at student performance on MAP testing, PARCC, and classroom assessments. Then, we evaluate intervention resources available in the school or seek alternative intervention programs to support the needs of our learners.

Goal setting is an important part of how we collect data about individual students. Students create a behavior and academic goal based on feedback given by the teacher. This goal can be tracked using student reflection on how they are progressing towards their goal, strategies they are using, and next steps they will take. Teachers give feedback using the comment option on Google Docs, teacher-student conferences, and filling out a rubric turned in with the assignment in order to check areas of concern and strength. Students have the option to alter their academic goals when they are achieved. Students may also conference with

other students who are working towards similar goals. These conferences allow them to discuss strategies that work best for them and help peer relationships.

Behavior goal setting is used to improve student awareness of behaviors and how it impacts their interactions with others and academics. Behavior data is collected through individualized sticker charts and/or daily checklists. Another option for students is to move rubber bands from one wrist to the other when they are given a cue to help promote self-awareness of behavior. These goals are reflected upon weekly/biweekly so that students can determine progress, reflect on strategies, and plan next steps. Goals can easily be changed when achieved.

Technology is used with all of our students. Students in K-2 share a cart of laptops. Students work on literacy skills on ABCYa and Starfall. K-2 students have opportunities to interact with technology with Promethean boards located in each classroom. They use teacher-created flip charts as centers and for interactive/shared writing. All students in grades 3-5 have individual access to Chromebooks. They are used on a daily basis to enhance research, writing, and word processing skills. Students have access to GAFE (Google Apps for Education), where teachers push out individualized and differentiated group assignments tailored to student needs and reading abilities. Students have opportunities online to participate in a discussion and to comment others' responses. Teachers give feedback electronically on assignments and students can upgrade their responses to writing prompts.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. **School Climate/Culture:**

Cultivating a positive learning community is a key factor in the academic and behavioral success of the students at Ronald McNair Elementary School. At the foundation of our behavioral success is our school-wide Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports system. We use SOAR expectations at our school to provide consistent expectations for students in our school building. SOAR is an acronym for behaviors that include being Safe, Organized, Actively learning, and Respectful. Each quarter, town hall meetings are held to review expectations and each morning, students stand and recite the SOAR expectations to start their day. These are the expectations for all students, regardless of grade, thus promoting a unified school community.

In addition to SOAR expectations, each teacher at RMES uses ClassDojo. ClassDojo is an interactive platform for providing immediate behavior feedback to students and parents. ClassDojo allows teachers to provide students with green points when they demonstrate SOAR expectations. Teachers then have the opportunity to use these awarded green points for a differentiated positive behavior classroom system. Some examples of these systems may include, allowing students to use green points to purchase items in a class store, providing extra recess time, earning lunch bunches with teachers, and more. By providing school wide expectations and systems for student behaviors, McNair engages students and motivates them to take ownership of their behavior at school.

McNair's PBIS committee, comprised of at least one teacher from each grade (specialists and special educators included), is tasked with making decisions regarding PBIS implementation in our school. These committee members report to their teams to allow each educator to have a voice in the PBIS system. This committee also decides upon the PBIS celebrations. At the end of each quarter, all students who meet a cumulative green point benchmark percentage are able to attend celebrations. These celebrations include dances, movies, and more, in order to reward their successes and promote social growth amongst students. Students who do not reach the 90% or higher mark, complete a reflection activity where they discuss and set goals for their behavior for the upcoming quarter.

However, motivating and appreciating students isn't the only focus of our school's climate and culture. We also have several ways to show appreciation of our staff members. At monthly meetings, staff are able to recognize the good work of their peers by writing a "Gold Medal Award." Staff fill out individual Gold Medal Awards to nominate any staff member in the building, then administration picks out four to read to the whole staff and those individuals receive a special gift card. Remaining Gold Medal Awards are then hung on a bulletin board in the staff workroom for all to read throughout the month. In addition, we have a weekly Staff Bulletin in which one of the columns includes a feature on different staff members to highlight their personal lives and accomplishments. We also have a social committee that works to provide social gatherings, not only at key times, like beginning of the year, holidays, and end of the year, but also intermittently throughout the school year for happy hours and bridal/baby showers and arranges monthly staff breakfasts. These are only a few of the ways we work to ensure that all of staff members are feeling appreciated and are able to SOAR at McNair.

2. **Engaging Families and Community:**

The school has provided many opportunities for parents, teachers, and the community to come together. The strategies that have been most successful in bringing together families, students, and community members have been our home-grown events that have been given life through the PTA. For example, our Back-to-School Picnic, which is held at the beginning of the school year, is similar to a large suburban block party. Not only is it a fun event for the neighborhood – bringing back old students and their families, new incoming families and students enjoy it too. Not only does the event raise money for the PTA, most importantly it sets a positive tone for the start of the school year. The picnic also brings out members from the business community as vendors attend to provide information, sell goods, or make donations for the McNair community. Another example of ways the school and community work together for student

success, was through our first ever STEM Expo held this past school year – where we invited families, community groups, and organizations focused on sparking interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Each student created a STEM project which they brought to the event in order to share their learning with those attending.

The administration and staff at McNair have created roles for parents on decision-making and advisory committees. For example, parents were invited to participate in a School Community Planning Group Meeting with the lead 5th grade teacher designated as the family life coordinator for this school year. In this pre-meeting, parents had a chance to hear a brief overview of the family life curriculum that will be taught to 5th grade students and provide my input and stakeholder approval on the plan before finalizing the materials that will be presented to other parents and used during classroom instruction. Additionally, there is a Principal's Advisory Committee (PAC) that provides the principal with feedback and insight from the parent's and staff's perspective on school processes, policies and initiatives. The PAC is a collection of parent and staff voices and provides a time to bring to the principal's attention existing and emerging issues at the school. This gives parents an opportunity to serve in an advisory, not decision-making, capacity - making recommendations and brainstorming possible solutions. Overall the administration and staff at McNair have worked hard to increase the collaboration with parents, the community, and local businesses in order to benefit all students.

3. **Professional Development:**

Ronald McNair Elementary School includes a community of learners committed to ongoing professional development. Learning occurs at many levels, including whole staff professional development meetings, bi-weekly grade level collaborative planning, small group professional learning communities, and individualized support. We have a full time Staff Development Teacher (SDT) who works with administration, the leadership team, and district level offices, to organize, develop, and facilitate learning. Our PD sessions engage staff in active learning rather than sit-and-get traditional trainings. We believe, like our students, adult learners benefit from authentic experiences that utilize multi-modalities of learning. The SDT works to build the capacity of teacher leaders within the building so many members of the staff are also able to facilitate learning sessions. Information from the sessions are shared using Google Classroom and on the SDT's website.

Based on a needs assessment, the SDT organized Tech Talk, a collaboration with district level technology specialists. Staff signed up for individualized training throughout the day. As a part of our New Teacher PLC, the SDT organized time for the new teachers to observe master teachers using specific observation protocols. Additionally, the SDT and reading specialist modeled lessons for classroom teachers to observe their own students. Teachers were selected to attend Elevating the Black Male, a multi-day training on how societal perceptions of young black males sustain the educational racial disparities in schools. Following the training, they met to plan next steps for the whole staff which resulted in a collaboration with the district's Equity Unit.

As a large school, we recognize the varying needs of our staff and coordinate PD opportunities that reflect the demands of our school, rather than solely relying on district level initiatives. Each year, we analyze multiple sources of data to construct a school-wide instructional focus along with a cultural proficiency focus. When conducting our root cause analysis, we use student and teacher voice data, academic performance data, and focused classroom observations, while also considering structures and processes that impact student achievement. This year our instructional focus is centered around small group, differentiated instruction with an emphasis on goal setting and feedback. Students have shared their excitement around goal setting with classroom teachers, specialists, office staff, and families. Many of our older students have used the goal setting process with district assessments. Every racial/ethnic subgroup, along with FARMS and special education students, in fourth and fifth grade demonstrated growth on our district wide reading assessment.

4. **School Leadership:**

The administration of Ronald McNair ES believes in shared leadership built on trust, relationships, respect, and accountability. Trust and respect are evident throughout the decision making process. Decisions made by the principal and assistant principal include the input of the Core Team (staff development teacher, reading specialists, and counselor) and Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) (team leaders for all grade levels, arts, special education and ESOL; Elected Faculty Representative (EFR) and Elected Services Representative (ESR)). Additionally, administration meets with the EFR and ESR on a monthly basis to discuss policies and programs that are working and those that need to be modified with their input. During ILT meetings, the team leaders act as the voice for those they represent. They gather input from their teammates to assist in the decision making process. The School Improvement Plan (SIP), which is the driving force of the work done at McNair, is created in a collaborative manner - first with the ILT, then with the staff. The SIP elevates the administration's expectations that every student is met with every day for small group differentiated instruction. As a result of this expectation, we have seen an increase in student performance in math and reading.

Accountability for student learning is ever present. Embedded in the SIP is the expectation for continuous data collection and review by all staff. Staff reflect on data during their team planning meetings to inform their instructional next steps and built into the school calendar are quarterly individual and team data chats. At these data chats, discussions around the effectiveness and ideas for new instructional strategies; realignment of resources to meet student needs and intervention programs are decided upon. As a result of these conversations, buddy reading programs, peer and adult mentoring program, before school groups and lunch bunches has been formed. It should be noted that administration has served as the point of contact for students on contracts for academic and behavioral needs, as well as has provided small group instruction for students in need.

McNair staff are a part of several committees - PBIS, School Climate & Culture, Instructional, ILT and Social. The committees allow all staff to play an active role in shaping an environment that is conducive to learning. Additionally, the instructional committee identifies opportunities for teachers to share effective instructional practices. In an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of our SIP goal, this committee created a teacher and student voice survey.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

McNair's instructional focus is daily, differentiated small group instruction with a spotlight on goal setting and feedback. These components address both academic and social-emotional needs.

Through small group instruction, we address individual student needs and apply motivational techniques to promote engagement. We utilize performance based activities to capture students interest and address different learning styles. Multiple assessments have proven to be effective for all of our learners (special education, ESOL, and enrichment). Struggling students receive additional small group instruction using research-based intervention programs in reading and math to improve basic skills and background knowledge in order to make gains toward mastery of curriculum objectives.

Additionally, goal setting is implemented in all K-5 classes. Teachers and students have the flexibility to implement goals specific to individual needs. The goal setting process is collaborative and centered around building relationships. To ensure student success, teachers check in and allow for student reflection. All students monitor their own progress throughout the year based on teacher feedback and student growth. Our second graders are using the restate, answer and prove strategy (RAP) during small group instruction to help students organize their written responses. After analyzing student responses, second grade teachers found a discrepancy between written and oral comprehension. County reading assessments require students to answer questions and use evidence from the text to support their answer. Setting goals and providing feedback to students on their responses help students to identify specific areas to improve their writing in response to reading. Since implementing RAP, second graders have shown tremendous growth in written response pass rates. In the fall, 22.9% of second grade students passed the written portion of mClass, a district wide reading assessment. In the Winter, 59.3% of the students in second grade passed the written portion of mClass.

Social-emotional needs are addressed through our in our school Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS). Teachers use Class Dojo to relay behavior information to parents, rewarding positive behavior and allowing students to receive feedback throughout the day. Students also set behavior goals for themselves. They self-monitor progress and receive feedback on what they can do to improve their behavior. Fourth grade teachers reported substantial gains in behavior using these strategies. For example, one group is working on following directions and using positive language. This group has demonstrated a twelve-point gain over a six week period. Overall, we have found that by focusing on small group, differentiated instruction, goal setting and feedback students are showing achievement gains and taking ownership for their learning.