U.S. Department of Education
2017 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 Ms. Marcie Wilson

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

Official School Name Clear Creek Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 737 North Clear Creek Road

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

City Hendersonville   State NC   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 28792-7032

County   Henderson County

Telephone (828) 697-4760   Fax (828) 698-6121
Web site/URL
          http://www.hendersoncountypublics
choolsnc.org/ccs/   E-mail   mmwilson@hcpsnc.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*Mr. Bo Caldwell   E-mail hrcaldwell@hcpsnc.org

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Henderson County Schools   Tel.   (828) 697-4733

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

_____Date_____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt

(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   13 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   4 Middle/Junior high schools
                                        6 High schools
                                        0 K-12 schools

                                        23 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, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	47	38	85
1	44	48	92
2	42	51	93
3	42	47	89
4	40	47	87
5	43	38	81
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	258	269	527

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
2 % Asian
5 % Black or African American
32 % Hispanic or Latino
2 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
54 % White
5 % 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: 11%

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	17
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	42
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	59
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	529
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.112
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	11

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 19 %
   101 Total number ELL

   Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
   Spanish, Chinese, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Pohnpeian, other Micronesian dialect

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 66 %
   Total number students who qualify: 351

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %
   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.

7	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	10	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	22	Specific Learning Disability
2	Emotional Disturbance	15	Speech or Language Impairment
3	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
0	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	Multiple Disabilities	4	Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3

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 including those teaching high school specialty subjects	25
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	15
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	12
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   20:1

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	96%	96%	97%	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 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 _   No X

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.

At Clear Creek Elementary School we believe that each child can learn and succeed in a safe, enriching environment that promotes growth and independence.

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

Walk down our halls and you will see a celebration of student learning and expectations. Student work hangs outside of classrooms. Cubs with Character expectations are visible throughout. Positive bus behavior is highlighted. Artwork from each child brings life to the white walls. Elaborate book fair displays ignite a passion for reading. Student-made posters advertise current service-learning events.

Listen closely and you will hear the sounds of student learning. Students are talking through their learning. Teachers are modeling new strategies. Custodians are encouraging students to persevere. The principal is talking to the instructional coach about our next instructional focus. The administrative assistant is reminding parents about upcoming events. The guidance counselor is facilitating a student group about family changes. A parent volunteer is practicing sight words with a struggling student.

These are the sights and sounds of a school committed to the whole child. These are the sights and sounds of CCS!

Located in the mountains of Western North Carolina, Clear Creek Elementary (CCS) serves five hundred twenty seven students in the outskirts of a small town in a rural area of Henderson County. We are part of a school district that includes 23 schools and over 113,500 students. The school system is the largest, single employer in the county. Since the 2012-13 school year, our school's minority population has grown from 29% to 46%. Our Hispanic population has grown from 21% to 32%, and our English Language Learners have grown from 16% to 19%. Our economically-disadvantaged students represent 66% of our student population. Due to these challenges, we have the opportunity to partner with community organizations to help our families meet their basic needs, thus allowing them the freedom to focus on their child's education. Another challenge we face is the transient nature of our student population, due to inconsistent housing and migrant employment. This challenge provides us an opportunity to focus on instructional consistency within our school and across our county, such as using a district-wide phonics program.

CCS was built fifteen years ago, replacing an older elementary school. Along with the existing staff, traditions transferred over to our new school, but since then, many more have been created, including student-led televised news and spirit weeks culminating in pep rallies led by our mascot, Cubby. Even though the staff has changed over the years, the heart of CCS continues to thrive. Teachers are deeply rooted in the culture and the foundational philosophy, invested in the mission, and optimistic about the future. Staff morale has strengthened over the years due to our encouraging, successful, and supportive culture.

CCS focuses on nurturing the whole child. The culture that we have built using the philosophies of Sean Covey's Seven Habits of Happy Kids, Jim Faye's Teaching with Love and Logic, and our positive behavior program helps our students and teachers have emotional fulfillment and a sense of belonging. Meeting basic needs and encouraging a healthy lifestyle keeps our kids ready for learning. Every morning, free breakfast is available for all students, ensuring them the energy needed to attack the challenges of the day.

From the cafeteria worker who rides the special education bus to the custodian who is a lunch buddy to a first grader, all staff are invested in students meeting their full potential. Staff members seek out opportunities to acknowledge and praise student learning, increasing student motivation and accountability. While sweeping the first grade hall, our custodian stops to listen to a group of children read a story. A student earns ice cream from a cafeteria worker after showing Cub with Character behavior all week. We believe that everyone can make a difference in the life of a child.

The success of our Cubs can be attributed to a variety of methods, supports, and initiatives. Students are able to access their academic potential because we give them purpose for learning, use whole-group, small-group, and independent learning communities, and encourage them to support their thinking while in discussion with others. A unique feature of our school that directly impacts student success is Cub Time. Each student receives individualized, targeted instruction during this time. During the last three years of implementation, our reading scores have consistently improved. Another unique initiative at our school is

our focus on oral language development. Teachers model and instruct students on ways to explain their thinking in complete sentences. Central Office members have noted an increase in student engagement and on-topic conversations during walkthroughs.

Our educational philosophy at Clear Creek Elementary School (CCS) is to create a safe, enriching environment where every child can learn and succeed now and in the future. Our core values include empowering every student to reach his or her potential, exhibiting honesty and integrity, supporting each other, collaborating to inspire professional growth, and striving continuously toward a standard of excellence.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At CCS, we engage students in activities that meet the North Carolina Standard Course of Study objectives for English/language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies. ELA includes reading, writing, and phonics instruction. Mathematics includes a focus on operations, algebraic thinking, number sense, measurement, data, and geometry. Science includes physical, earth, and life science. Social Studies includes history, geography, environmental literacy, economic literacy, civics, government, and culture.

We present each standard in student-friendly terms using "I Can" statements or Essential Questions across all subject areas and grade levels, providing students with a purpose for every lesson. Those statements and questions guide student learning, help students gauge their understanding, and make connections to real-world experiences. At CCS, we develop future productive citizens by teaching students to explain their thinking and to interact with others' thinking.

Students acquire ELA foundational skills through the implementation of our county literacy framework and our district-wide phonics program, presented whole group, practiced in leveled small groups, and applied independently during literacy stations. In support of our framework, we have found success in integrating the Comprehension Toolkit with our state standards. We choose to incorporate The Toolkit because it allows students to develop reading and metacognitive skills. For example, one unit teaches students to record their thinking as they read. Teachers model how good readers monitor their comprehension by stopping to record their questions, make inferences, create predictions, and record new learning. All students develop decoding and spelling skills with Letterland, our phonics program. Our targeted instruction on phonics and comprehension help our students become critical readers and thinkers, allowing them to access the standards at a deeper level. In ELA, we integrate oral language opportunities to give these young citizens a voice as they express their point of view. Our students consistently refer to the class-created, standard-specific sentence frames when explaining their thinking in both oral and written form. We emphasize the importance of respectful communication through modeling, coaching, and redirecting. These life-long civic learning skills are practiced daily through the use of collaborative pairs. Collaborative pairs promote engagement, allowing students to process, share, and clarify their understanding of reading standards, as students alternate roles as speaker and listener.

Our intentional reading instruction allows students direct access to social studies standards. Instead of the focus being on learning to read, the students can now read to learn. To engage students, we use primary documents and current events from websites, periodicals, and digital resources, such as Discovery Education, Time for Kids, and Social Studies Weekly. A first grade objective is to explain why national holidays are celebrated. Throughout the year, activities honoring holidays such as Constitution Day, Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, Patriot's Day, and Labor Day provide opportunities for our young citizens to celebrate, learn, and honor our country. A fifth grade objective is to explain why civic participation is important. Our focus on oral language allows our students to discuss the candidates, express their viewpoints, and make informed decisions leading up to Kids Voting Day.

We develop our students' understanding of mathematical standards through the deliberate progression from concrete to representational to abstract. To support our students, we begin with manipulatives and progress to drawings and models, leading to a symbolic understanding of the standard. We also provide visual references, such as anchor charts. These anchor charts include "I Can" statements, processing steps, strategies for solving, and sentence stems with academic vocabulary to support mathematical conversations. One type of mathematical conversation we use to enhance student learning is focused on error analysis. When students encounter incorrect work, either their own or that of a peer, they are able to use their mathematical understanding to critique the reasoning used and express it in oral and written form.

We teach science through experiences. Our students are engaged in a variety of in-class experiments, community partnerships, and off-campus opportunities. Our online subscription to Mystery Science provides our school with resources to conduct experiments rooted in the standards. Third grade successfully

taught their standards on the sun using the paper plate sundial experiment. Second grade partners with the local 4-H Club to provide each class with training and materials to hatch quail eggs each spring. Students learn first-hand about the life cycle of a bobwhite quail and compare and contrast it to other life cycles addressed in our second grade science standard.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Our school's non-core instruction focuses on the whole child by including cultural arts, library, technology, and physical education. All of our students, K-5, participate in these classes in a four-day rotation schedule. For example, one first grade class will participate in cultural arts on Monday, PE/health on Tuesday, media center on Wednesday, and technology lab on Thursday. Each of the class periods is 50 minutes long. This schedule allows every Clear Creek student to attend every specials class at least once a week. All four specialist teachers integrate core curriculum standards into their lessons. This collaboration benefits our students as they make connections across curriculum areas.

In Cultural Arts, students participate in learning activities based on North Carolina's Music and Visual Arts Curriculums. The teacher plans activities that support each grade level's standards. For example, during a fourth grade unit on Native American History, addressing a fourth grade social studies standard, students study tribal ceremonies and rituals in their classroom. As an extension, the cultural arts teacher has students create 3-D Cherokee Booger masks in alignment with her standard to make art using a variety of tools, media, and processes. This integration gives students a real-world application of a foundational mathematical concept.

During their physical education time, students participate in a variety of collaborative activities that promote teamwork. The civic learning skills that are developed and nurtured during these teamwork activities transfer into the classroom and into the real world. Students more effectively communicate in small groups, disagree respectfully, and compromise with their peers. Each day our goal is to cultivate 21st Century Learners who can apply these skills to be productive citizens. In addition to these lifelong skills, students are also learning the importance of balancing mind and body. Our elementary-certified instructor focuses on nutrition, goal setting, physical strength, conditioning, and flexibility. For some students, this instruction is the only health coaching they might receive, enabling them to maintain a healthy lifestyle into adulthood. Our PE instructor works with students to collect data, conferences with them to set individual goals, and supports them to meet their goals. Through goal setting students are expected to create a plan, reflect on their progress, and revise their plan throughout the year. This process helps students not to compare themselves to others, but rather to focus on their personal best.

During their instructional time in media center, students explore, read, and research. The media specialist uses the County Research Framework to assist students in researching topics related to their grade level's science and social studies standards. An example of this assistance is when she pulled resources for third grade students during a biography research project that met one of their Social Studies standards. Another example is when she integrated research into one of her center activities allowing fourth graders to continue their class research in the library. Before students begin research projects, they take part in lessons on internet safety and plagiarism. During the research, they apply these lessons in a real-world context to produce a high-quality and legal research paper. The Information and Technology standard requires students to understand the difference between reading for enjoyment and reading for information and apply different procedures and strategies for approaching these texts. Each grade level's core curriculum requires students to read proficiently and understand a book at an appropriate level of complexity. Our media specialist bridges these standards by teaching students a love of reading and how to self-select appropriate books.

During technology lab class, students participate in online applications that provide differentiated reinforcement of foundational skills in reading and math. Applications such as Reading Eggs, Math Seeds, Moby Max, and Reading Express require students to take a placement test to determine their strengths and weaknesses. Once assessments are completed, the technology lab teacher and the classroom teacher are able to access reports and utilize them to plan targeted instruction. For example, first grade gets an emailed report from Math Seeds, telling which students have mastered certain addition and subtraction facts. Based

on that information, the classroom teacher is able to have students focus on their individualized areas of weaknesses.

While we emphasize instruction on the academic standards, we also recognize the importance of embracing the whole child. Our specialists ensure that each child is celebrated for his or her additional talents and empowered to succeed in the classroom.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Clear Creek Cubs will experience the same highly effective, research-based instructional strategies in every classroom, every day, every year. Our focus on gradual release guides our instruction in every subject area. It includes whole group instruction, guided practice, independent practice, and differentiated small group instruction.

Gradual release begins with whole-group, explicit instruction. All teachers ensure high levels of learning during their whole-group instruction by modeling Marzano's high-yield strategies such as higher order thinking, extended thinking skills, summarizing, note taking, feedback, advanced organizers, and anchor charts. Next, teachers provide support during guided practice to collect data.

We place students in flexible, small groups targeted to each skill and based on the data gathered. These fluid groups meet the diverse, individual needs of our students by providing extra support for our students below grade level and extending the learning for our students above grade level. To further differentiate, students regularly change groups based on teacher observation, work samples, and updated assessment data. Examples of these small groups include guided reading, guided math, and guided phonics instruction. An example of this differentiation is a struggling first grader who receives targeted reading instruction on a level F text, scaffolded support for understanding mathematical equations, and additional practice in letter-sound correspondence. Another example is of a thriving second grader who receives two days of enrichment activities with our Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) teacher and two days of accelerated reading comprehension work.

After receiving whole group and small group instruction, our Cubs are prepared to practice their standards with independent, interactive activities. These activities are aligned to the grade level standards but are differentiated through the amounts of work, time given, and support received. There are technology-based reading and math supports such as MyOn, Starfall, Reading Eggs, and MobyMax. While working on these programs, students practice letter-sound correspondence, reading comprehension skills, vocabulary, math facts, and mathematical problem solving.

Throughout the year, teachers refer to data, identifying students who have academic deficiencies and need a "triple dip" of individualized instruction. This third round of instruction may include focused practice with the classroom teacher or a member of our support staff such as an assistant, reading teacher, or tutor. The specific, repetitive instruction these students receive provides them with multiple opportunities to develop the skills they need to meet their individual learning goals. This tiered support system, which meets monthly and includes the principal, the counselor, the psychologist, and grade-level representatives, proves to be successful with our students.

We are able to raise and sustain the success of our students by taking advantage of a variety of data sources and employing a number of powerful processes. Such sources include Reading 3D, End of Grade Reading and Math tests in grades 3-5, Benchmarks, Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State to State for English language learners (ACCESS), Individualized Education Plan present levels of performance, and Multi-Tier System of Supports data. We use data from each of these sources to identify students for various purposes. One example is our process for evaluating EVAAS student prediction data, which begins with the principal and the school leadership team analyzing the EVAAS data and determining the gap between predicted proficiency and our school improvement goals. Next, our grade-level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) identify the number of students needed to increase our predicted proficiency. Finally, individual teachers identify the students they will target to meet our goal and how they will target them.

From the 2013-2014 school year to the 2015-2016 school year, our student proficiency has grown from 72.5% to 82.6%. In addition, our eleven subgroups have also shown significant growth. We are especially pleased with our Economically Disadvantaged subgroup growth from 64.7% to 78.8%. Even though we have four subgroups that continue to have an identified achievement gap greater than ten points, we are also pleased to report we have closed these proficiency gaps significantly. Our Students with Disabilities subgroup has closed from 20.6% to 50%. Our Limited English Proficient subgroup has closed from 57.1% to 64.4%. Our Multi-racial subgroup has closed from 60% to 64.7%. Our Black subgroup has closed from 40.7% to 59.1%. We believe the closing of these achievement gaps is a direct result of our implementation of the intentional methods, differentiated interventions, and varied assessments we have described.

1. **School Climate/Culture:**

Clear Creek's Cub with Character program defines our school culture. Teachers model these behavioral expectations and explicitly teach students to be respectful, responsible, kind, and safe throughout all areas of our school. When students need additional support with any of these expectations, interventions are in place to ensure they are given opportunities for practice and success. Our teachers, or Cubmasters, embody Cubs with Character and use the tenets of this program to support our students' academic, social, and emotional growth by teaching them how to treat others with respect and kindness, to make decisions that keep themselves and others safe, and to be responsible and respectful in their actions. Cubmasters positively reinforce expected behavior with a variety of individual-student, whole-class, and school-wide rewards, including tickets, classroom coupons, paw slips, star students, and class compliments.

The foundational philosophies that guide our Cubmasters as they implement our Cub with Character culture are Teaching with Love and Logic, Carol Dweck's Mindset: The Psychology of Success, and Seven Habits of Happy Kids. Teaching with Love and Logic addresses social and emotional growth by empowering students to take ownership of their actions, their responses to others, and problem solving. It supports teachers by giving them a framework for responding to common behavior incidences. Our focus on Dweck's growth mindset, rather than a fixed mindset, impacts the academic and emotional growth of our students and staff. Because our Cubmasters believe that effort equals success, they bolster this belief in each of their students, leading to greater effort and meeting their academic potential. This mindset comes to life through the application of the Seven Habits. Habits one through three focus on managing yourself, habits four through six focus on leading others, and habit seven focuses on unleashing potential. Habit number two is begin with the end in mind. In the classroom, students set learning goals, create a plan for how to achieve those goals, and put forth the effort needed to reach those goals.

Teachers feel valued and supported at Clear Creek because of the Cubs with Character culture. At every faculty meeting, teachers give written shout-outs to each other and receive gift cards to local businesses. In the principal's weekly memorandum, staff members are recognized for synergizing to meet the needs of our school. The memorandum also mentions staff news, allowing us to support each other outside of school. One of our favorite ways to build our staff community is through our monthly bonding events such as themed food days and on and off campus staff activities.

2. **Engaging Families and Community:**

At Clear Creek, we focus on the whole child. We believe that students can only focus on academics once their safety, social-emotional, and physiological needs are met. To meet those needs, we have families and community members eager to invest in our school. We are fortunate to have an active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Their president, a father in our school, established a new, welcoming program whereby each morning, six fathers open our students' car doors with a smile and a warm greeting. Our PTO also organizes events to increase parental involvement including a Fall Festival, Father/Daughter Dance, Mother/Son Game Night, and Movie Night. Our PTO also organizes parent volunteers for school events, tutoring, and other activities to support the student-learning environment.

Our strategy to encourage families to attend academic activities throughout the year begins with the positive relationships established between families and staff through PTO-organized events. Using our English and Spanish automated phone system, we invite parents to upcoming academic events held at various times to accommodate all families' schedules. One such event is Lunch and Learn, where parents eat lunch with their students and participate in classroom activities. Science Night, Math Night, and Phonics Night allow families to participate in activities across different curricular areas and provide parents with resources to use at home to support further learning. We communicate student success with parents during these events as well as through midterms, report cards, an online grading system, and conferences. Because parents are involved, students experience success.

Another strategy we use is to partner with community members to meet the physiological and safety needs of our students and to provide enrichment activities that enhance our students' academic performance. For example, local churches provide backpacks full of food for seventy-five students each week and provide coats, gloves, and mittens for our students. The Flat Rock Playhouse sponsors a weekly club that is instrumental in helping our at-risk students find their voice in the classroom and in the community. The Asheville Art Museum provides weekly art instruction to our 4th graders and hosts a field trip to the museum. Kiwanis International sponsors a service-learning club and quarterly Terrific Kid awards. These opportunities assist in building our students' confidence, which transfers to the classroom and allows students to take risks in the academic environment.

Due to these successful partnerships with our families and communities, we have experienced significant school improvement, increased participation in school activities, and a greater sense of school pride. Celebrating our successes with the community through social media, websites, and news releases invites additional partnerships for our school.

3. **Professional Development:**

Teachers and staff at Clear Creek participate in school, district, and state programs of professional development. Our research-based approach to professional development is data driven, aligned to our state standards, and based on students' needs and teachers' requests. After evaluating the needs of our students and the capacities of our teachers, our school conducts professional learning focused on both pedagogy and student characteristics. Similar to the gradual release model we use with our students, our instructional coach models our new standards-based professional development strategies and teachers apply new skills in a supported setting with both school- and district-based professional development initiatives.

Literacy is a good example of the ways in which professional development has strengthened the achievement of Clear Creek students. Because many of our students, two-thirds of whom are free and reduced lunch and one in five of whom are second language learners, struggle with expressive and receptive language, we implemented a professional development program on oral and written language, which addressed several ELA standards across all grade levels. Given a menu of summer reading selections, teachers had the opportunity to select texts to support their growth as an educator. These selections jump-started the professional development conversations that continued throughout the year. Teachers learned how to increase learning opportunities in their classrooms and implemented such strategies as turn and talk, collaborative pairs, sentence frames, and teacher redirection. District walkthrough staff noted increased student engagement and students explaining their thinking orally. Their observations confirmed the impact our instruction is having on individual students as well as our school as a whole. Since 2012-2013, student performance improved from 74% to 80.7% proficiency in mClass (K-3) and from 47.7% to 77.4% in Reading EOGs (3-5).

Our county initiated interest in creating a literacy framework. Our instructional coach and principal worked together to preview the framework with our teachers. Teachers at our school were given time to determine the best implementation in their classrooms and then provided feedback on the framework to the county. Our school hosted a county-wide training led by Max Thompson, Project Director of the Learning-Focused Instructional Framework, which allowed us to implement some of his strategies within our existing framework.

The resulting increase in teacher capacity cultivated teacher leaders who are eager to contribute at the district and state levels as well. They have led several district-wide professional development sessions on literacy strategies, growth mindset, and guided reading implementation. Our principal and instructional coach have presented our school's initiatives at the 2016 North Carolina Collaborative Conference for Student Achievement and the 2017 North Carolina Association of School Administrators Conference on Educational Leadership.

4. **School Leadership:**

Our philosophy is everyone has a voice, and through working together, we can ensure the success of each of our Cubs. This philosophy is embodied in our motto, "Achieve Success at CCS!" Our structure begins with the principal and the instructional coach constantly evaluating our school on such topics as student behavior, safety issues, parent support, instructional needs, and classroom concerns. Through constant conversation and reflection, they are able to prioritize what needs to be accomplished for our staff, students, and families. Sometimes these conversations begin in our School Improvement Team (SIT) meetings where every grade level is given a voice. Other times, the principal and the instructional coach present a possible solution, which is then discussed and decided upon by the SIT members after receiving feedback from their teams. In some instances, critical decisions must be made quickly, and our school supports our principal to make those decisions for the well-being of all.

The SIT team is an integral part of our leadership structure and includes a representative from each of the following groups: grade levels, assistants, specialists, and parents, as well as the principal, instructional coach, guidance counselor, and district partner. Our policy states that members must be voted on every two years by their peers and all meetings must be open to all stakeholders. Before these meetings, the principal presents an agenda including topics of discussion, upcoming events, and new business from the team. SIT representatives review topics with their peers for discussion and feedback. As a result of these meetings, all staff are ensured the opportunity to be heard. Other times, our principal wants to hear directly from each staff member, so she utilizes resources such as Google surveys to collect input on topics including technology purchases, grade level requests, and after-school duties. These ongoing school-wide conversations lead to instructional consistency, which directly impacts student success in the classroom.

Another leadership decision that directly impacts student learning is the collaboration with district stakeholders. For example, our principal facilitates a meeting with our Title I Director and our second and third grade teachers regarding our "bubble kids." Conversations focus on individual student's Reading 3D Dibels Data, specific interventions available, and student's EOG success predictions. For example, a second grade student was predicted to make a two on the EOG based on his middle of year benchmark data. In response to this data, his teacher adjusted her instruction by creating a sight word fluency station, setting a fluency goal for him, and tracking his fluency data. These collective efforts directly impact student learning.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Our single, most influential practice that is unique to Clear Creek is our "Cub Time." Our school has a designated time each day devoted to target the needs of all students. Whether the focus is on phonics based on DIBELS data, written comprehension based on TRC data, or reading comprehension based on EOG and EVAAS data, students are guaranteed to receive intentional, personalized instruction. This additional layer of individualized instruction has helped us close our achievement gaps and sustain high performance and high progress for our students.

The first step in implementing Cub Time starts with the principal creating a master schedule that allows each grade level to have a designated 45 minute block each day. This ensures that support staff is used by each grade level at a different time throughout the day. Such support staff includes EC teachers, ESL teachers, interventionists, tutors, assistants, the speech teacher, and reading specialist. In our next step, grade level teams use current progress monitoring data to group students according to common academic trends. Depending on the needs of the students, across grade level grouping occurs. Once groups are formed, the assigned staff member creates lessons designed for their specific needs. Lessons range from previewing vocabulary, scaffolding standard-based assignments, reviewing essential skills, or extending beyond current grade level expectations. Through continual progress monitoring data, students can fluidly move between groups, focusing on their most recent needs.

Cub Time is efficient and effective because every Cub in our school receives exactly what they need, when they need it, in a way that best meets their needs. One example is when one of our Cubs performed below grade level in the kindergarten reading comprehension assessment but then went on to score above grade level expectations in second grade. This child had no concepts about print and was therefore unable to read in kindergarten. This student was involved in Cub Time every year since then and is currently in second grade. In this child's most recent reading comprehension benchmark, this student was able to read and respond to a level M text, surpassing grade level expectations. This student's results are very typical for a student who has been a part of our Cub Time over multiple years at Clear Creek. Due to consistent Cub Time across each grade level, the third grade reading EOG scores have grown significantly from 59% proficiency to 76% proficiency in two years time. Our "all hands on deck" approach to meeting the needs of each student is proving successful year after year.