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 Ms. Kristi Motsch

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

Official School Name Toll Gate Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 12183 Tollgate Road

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

City Pickerington   State OH   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 43147-7863

County Fairfield County

Telephone (614) 834-6300   Fax (614) 834-6310

Web site/URL
http://www.pickerington.k12.oh.us/toll-gate-elementary/   E-mail   Kristi_Motsch@plsd.us

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. Chris Briggs   E-mail chris_briggs@plsd.us

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

District Name Pickerington Local School District   Tel.   (614) 833-2110

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. Vanessa Niekamp

(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   7 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   5 Middle/Junior high schools
                                  2 High schools
                                  0 K-12 schools

                                  14 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
   [X] 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	0	0	0
K	51	45	96
1	52	51	103
2	71	57	128
3	77	73	150
4	67	59	126
5	0	0	0
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	318	285	603

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
9 % Black or African American
3 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
80 % White
6 % 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: 6%

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	20
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	14
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	34
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	603
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.056
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 4 %
26 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Arabic, Spanish, Amharic, Vietnamese, Russian, Swahili, Wolof, Krio, Twi, Urdu

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 14 %
Total number students who qualify: 78

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %
116 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.

21	Autism	1	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	8	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	36	Specific Learning Disability
0	Emotional Disturbance	23	Speech or Language Impairment
2	Hearing Impairment	1	Traumatic Brain Injury
15	Mental Retardation	0	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
9	Multiple Disabilities	0	Developmentally Delayed

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: <u>8</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	24
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	21
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   <u>26:1</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	97%	97%	97%	96%	0%
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.

District mission is to provide an engaging, innovative and holistic experience that empowers all students to become responsible, productive citizens. School mission is Growing Leaders.

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

Toll Gate Elementary is the largest of seven elementary buildings and serves students from grades kindergarten through fourth grade in the suburb of Pickerington, Ohio. Pickerington Local School district educates over 10,000 students annually, and our city has been identified as one of the fastest growing in Central Ohio.

Construction on Toll Gate began in 2007, and opened for students and staff in August 2009. Enrollment has continued to grow since that time, and we are currently serving over 600 K-4 students. Toll Gate was constructed at a site that was originally part of National Road 40, which had a tollgate, hence the naming of the school. A dedication ceremony was held on October 11, 2009, complete with a ribbon-cutting and students sharing essays on, "What my new school means to me".

Toll Gate services 20% minority students, 18% of students receive special education services, and 14% of students receive free/reduced lunch. Twenty-one students are identified as having Autism. Approximately 20% of third and fourth grade students are identified as Gifted in one or more areas.

Toll Gate supports our district's vision by providing engaging, innovative and holistic experiences that empower students to become responsible, productive citizens. Our school mission statement of "Growing Leaders" supports our district vision by recognizing that all students can show responsibility through leadership.

A unique feature of Toll Gate Elementary is that we are connected to Toll Gate Middle School, which houses students in grades five and six. This connection provides opportunities for both students and staff to participate in combined school experiences. Our schools have collaborated on K-6 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) design challenges and disability awareness events. Together, older and younger students share simulation experiences and disability awareness education. This is significant as Toll Gate serves our district's entire population of students identified as Intellectually Delayed. Currently Toll Gate serves 116 students with disabilities. This has allowed us to create an appreciation for multiple types of learners.

A valuable asset to our school community is our PTO. We work together to support school initiatives, and students take an active role in presenting ideas and making decisions. Two way communication with families fosters a partnership that includes opportunities for students and staff to share curriculum updates and for parents to share school community events at PTO monthly meetings.

The Toll Gate experience provides a strong foundation for learning for all students. There is a focus on skills in reading, math, science, and social studies. Learning objectives are clearly articulated during instruction and rubrics are utilized to share expected outcomes with students. The implementation of daily Enrichment and Intervention time for reading and math allows teachers to differentiate instruction and personalize learning. Grades 3 and 4 are piloting one to one devices for our district so that teachers and students can share the skills they are learning that are important for a global community including collaboration and communication.

Staff supports, such as our Instructional Coach, allow teachers to participate in instructional rounds where they are able to observe and share effective instructional practices. Response to Intervention (RTI) staff work weekly with students on reading and math skills to close the gap for identified students from progress monitoring. Toll Gate partners with Americorps to provide literacy skills for identified K-3 students.

Programs such as Problem of the Week and the Newbery Club encourage students to stretch their thinking by solving challenging problems and reading rigorous texts. Toll Gate offers students an opportunity to practice editing skills through our Publishing Room in which students publish a writing piece of their choice. Completed books are shared by students at our annual Celebration of Learning as well as portfolios that allow students to show their progress in writing and other content areas. Artist statements allow students to explain their thinking while designing visual art that is displayed in the hallways.

Toll Gate offers an intentional focus on career and college readiness. Through monthly presentations of Community Career Exploration, students learn about career possibilities and skills necessary to function in a global society including problem solving and cooperation.

Toll Gate follows the Ohio Improvement Process through Building Leadership Team meetings where we analyze school-wide reading and math data which is then shared through Teacher Based Teams to improve instructional practices. All students are responsible for monitoring their learning through leadership notebooks, where students analyze their progress in reading and math and share this information with their families through student-led conferences.

Since 2014 Toll Gate has been an accredited Heart Safe School through the Snider Cardiovascular Institute. All fourth grade students and all staff receive annual training in hands-only CPR. Medical drills are held three times annually to practice the skills learned through the accreditation process.

Toll Gate Elementary embodies the spirit of excellence worthy of National Blue Ribbon recognition. This fall Toll Gate received an Ohio Momentum Award for our building report card scores. Our intentional high instructional expectations and use of data combined with a focus on a paradigm of leadership makes Toll Gate a special place to learn!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Toll Gate Elementary offers a rigorous core curriculum for reading, math, social studies and science that is aligned to Ohio's Learning Standards and research-based best practices to support students' academic success. The district-adopted literacy and mathematics curriculums are used to plan and pace instruction and to give students an opportunity to explore content via multiple methods.

Toll Gate uses Wit and Wisdom, a literacy program with authentic, high-quality texts, challenging content, and essential questions, to build foundational reading skills and higher-order thinking experiences as its core English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum. Lessons are designed to inspire curiosity while students learn and master essential reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, and vocabulary skills. The focus is on deepening students' ability to comprehend complex texts and establish a basis for the use of evidence in oral and written communication. Teachers use guided reading methods for students to receive fluency and comprehension instruction at their instructional level. This is determined by the Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) which is administered to all students three times per year. Students learn strategies for comprehension and utilize texts that often correlate to topics in science and social studies. Progress is measured through DRAs and flexible grouping is based on this data, ensuring that each student receives personalized instruction.

Toll Gate uses Fundations as its core phonics program. This program utilizes a multi-sensory approach that uses systematic, explicit instruction in kindergarten, first, and second grades. It is an integral part of a multi-tiered system of supports framework to provide research-based instruction focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, high frequency word study, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension strategies, handwriting and spelling. Daily rotations are implemented to provide students opportunities to practice reading and writing skills both independently and collaboratively while teachers meet with individuals or small groups to provide further instruction.

Lucy Calkins writing instruction is integrated within the ELA curriculum. This writing program concentrates on responses to text and writing that incorporates text evidence. This model provides opportunities for students to engage in various types of writing and to receive specific, directed feedback from peers and the teacher to improve their writing. Rubrics and student portfolios allow students to evaluate and compare their writing progress.

Eureka Math serves as the core math curriculum at Toll Gate. Instruction revolves around building students' number sense and logical knowledge of mathematical concepts to develop deep understanding. Meaningful real-world connections are made to the content, and mathematical fluency and confidence are developed through the use of common strategies from grade to grade. Teachers also utilize guided small group instruction and math rotations to further develop students' skills and understanding of the content. Through these strategies, students have opportunities to engage in both independent and collaborative learning activities, receive intensive instruction and immediate feedback, and practice skills through a variety of methods. There is a focus on students solving problems in multiple ways and explaining their thinking in detail. A daily thirty-minute Enrichment and Intervention time provides opportunities for flexible grouping based on pre-assessments, and personalized instruction targeted to students' specific needs. During this time, students who are identified through benchmark data as needing RTI services are provided intensive instruction. High achieving and Gifted students receive enrichment.

Toll Gate also uses ST Math as an online math resource. ST Math is a spatial temporal program designed to boost math comprehension and proficiency to engage students by solving puzzles using no words. Students get the opportunity to practice, complete levels, receive immediate feedback, and track their progress in their leadership data notebooks. ST Math syllabus completion is a school-wide goal and tracked monthly with updates celebrated at school-wide meetings.

State social studies and science standards are used to plan relevant learning experiences and are integrated

with ELA and mathematics. Science standards and skills are also taught through STEM experiences and school-wide quarterly grade level design challenges designed by a staff action team. Social studies standards are woven into project-based learning experiences and integrated into ELA instruction. Field trips are aligned to science and/or social studies standards, and in-house experiences such as Immigration Day are planned to simulate experiences and allow opportunity for students to apply their learning. Fourth grade utilizes an online program, Ohio As America, for their social studies program. Fourth grade students go to the State House each year and engage in experiences such as Project Civilization where students simulate skills necessary for real life experiences such as prioritizing wants and needs.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Toll Gate offers a multitude of learning opportunities for students that support the core curriculum.

For students who need intervention in reading or math, two RTI teachers utilize Leveled Literacy and Do the Math programs to provide intervention and support. RTI teachers engage in an inclusion model with primary grade classrooms to support implementation of our phonics program.

All students at Toll Gate participate in physical education (PE) classes one time per week for 55 minutes. Visual art, music, and technology classes are taught for 2 nine-week periods per year, with students receiving instruction once per week for 55 minutes.

The music instructor focuses on the state music curriculum standards in a way that systematically builds the knowledge of music concepts from kindergarten through fourth grade. Social studies and literacy concepts are incorporated into lessons through identification of countries of origin for various types of music, use of ELA books about artists, and identifying time periods that musical pieces were written in a timeline. The mathematical concept of fractions is integrated into the curriculum through the instruction of reading half and quarter notes. The music teacher supports students in their spring performance at our Celebration of Learning. A drum residency was completed, with a visiting artist teaching students about taiko drums and assisting with building a taiko drum for our school. Students were engaged in multiple opportunities to play various taiko drums and lead their class in the creation of various rhythms.

The visual arts teacher implements state art curriculum concepts through units planned to expose students to various art forms that are developmentally appropriate. Studies of artists who utilized those medias are also incorporated, giving opportunities for students to make connections between their work and that of known artists. Students experience hands-on art creation intertwined with discussion about age appropriate concepts related to artistic themes, movements and symbolism. Students create Artist Statements that describe their creative process while designing visual art pieces.

The PE teacher develops units that align to state curriculum standards for both physical education and health while encouraging active lifestyles. Emphasis is placed on cooperation and sportsmanship. Students are engaged in building their skills and knowledge of popular sports and activities. Home-school connections are made through opportunities for students to bring in photos showing an active lifestyle outside of school and through a winter break exercise challenge.

The technology teacher focuses on student use of devices for productivity purposes, digital citizenship, and safe use of web resources. After the district moved to a Google platform, the technology teacher implemented lessons that require students to utilize these tools to communicate appropriately, create slides, share documents, and create glyphs.

Our school counselor teaches whole class guidance lessons focused on the 7 Habits of Happy Kids. Students can self-refer or be referred for small group counseling focused on friendship, family changes, loss and grief, worry, and other situations. These groups are referred to as "fun lunches," as students form connections to one another. Individual counseling and support is available to every student in the school, and the counselor engages in problem-solving with students who are referred to the office for behavioral concerns.

Students at Toll Gate have daily access to a Media Center that is bright with natural light. The Media Assistant makes intentional purchases of books that students suggest based on their interests, and implements mini-lessons with students on library skills. Students actively select books related their interests and on their independent reading level as recommended through Accelerated Reader (AR). Students at Toll Gate work towards AR goals each quarter, and progress toward individual goals is displayed by grade level on "trees" in a hallway. The media assistant helps teachers gather resources for topics of study, access technology equipment, and implement projects with their classes. Future plans include makerspace opportunities for students while visiting the Media Center

Our school district is currently implementing a 1:1 device initiative, and Toll Gate will be part of next year. Our current allocation allows for fourth grade to have enough iPads to be 1:1. The increased device availability has allowed exploration of and practice with blending learning environments. Some technology resources that are used daily include Zearn, Moby Max, Prodigy, and Nearpod.

Toll Gate Elementary's fourth grade students participate in Junior Achievement. This community staffed program implements a curriculum that is focused on building students' financial literacy, economic standards, and knowledge of entrepreneurship. They learn about opportunity cost and simulate a small business partnership by designing and selling products.

3. **Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:**

Toll Gate has been intentional through its BLT in developing a collection of common effective instructional practices that each classroom teacher has committed to provide to all students. Some of these include guided reading practices, daily rotations to personalize learning, improving our depth of knowledge questioning, increasing student engagement through strategies such as socratic seminars, and giving more opportunities for students to provide effective feedback to each other. Toll Gate utilizes district-adopted standardized testing to track students in subgroups on a monthly basis. Creating action plans with pre and post assessments has allowed us to identify students for flexible grouping and differentiated learning opportunities. Toll Gate utilizes district common assessments in TBTs to develop action plans complete with post assessments to gage student growth.

On the macro level, students in third grade are given the Terra Nova Reading, Math and Language test each fall as well as the Inview Cognitive Ability Test. Third and fourth graders take the Ohio American Institute for Research (AIR) tests in Math and Reading, and fourth graders also take the AIR Social Studies test. The achievement and value added data from these tests is carefully analyzed both to guide individual student instruction and to help teachers focus on where there are strengths and areas of opportunity. Formative instructional practices, such as posting clear learning targets and providing effective feedback are discussed to determine how they can be transferred from one setting to another to gain similar positive student learning results. This type of collaboration and sharing of strengths based on positive data analysis has created a culture of forward-thinking, lifelong learners in the staff.

Locally developed pre and post assessments help drive lesson planning, differentiation, flexible grouping, and re-teaching throughout all grade levels and content areas. Pre-assessment data is utilized to determine which students need re-teaching of foundational skills, which students are ready for the unit of instruction, and which students have already mastered the content and need enrichment instruction. Throughout instruction, formative assessment is used to re-assess and flexibly group students to meet their changing levels of understanding and mastery of content. Post-assessments are not seen as summative but are viewed as reflective work through which teachers determine which students require re-teaching of material to strengthen their understanding or to help them gain the mastery that they have not yet achieved. In this way, teachers act as reflective practitioners throughout units of study.

All students are assessed using a universal screener three times a year in both reading and math. The STAR assessment from Renaissance Learning is used to group students into multiple tiers and identify students that require intervention. Two RTI teachers support Tier II and III students while classroom teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of Tier I students during Enrichment and Intervention time. STAR instructional reports are analyzed to determine trends in student learning and identify which standards

students have yet to master. Flexible grouping is used based on mastery of skills.

For students needing enrichment due to mastery of grade level standards, high achieving students in grades 2, 3, and 4 are cluster-grouped so that teachers are able to provide differentiation during Enrichment and Intervention times and during daily ELA and math rotations. The district Gifted Instructional Coach is housed at Toll Gate Elementary and is able to collaborate with teachers who work with these learners to implement collaborative group work, project based learning, and independent individual extensions to enrich and extend instructional pedagogy. A daily Gifted math program is provided to qualifying 3rd and 4th grade students and focuses on complex problem solving skills, logical thinking, and advanced mathematical concepts.

A 1:1 technology and blended learning pilot project has increased the opportunity for differentiation through increased student choice in the path and pace of their learning. Through technology, students are learning at their individual levels through programs, games, videos, and other digital resources individually and in small groups. These formats are appealing and engaging to students as well as providing opportunities for them to revisit concepts as needed. Allowing students to have voice and choice in the path and pace of their learning has created an environment that fosters teacher as facilitator and student as director.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. **School Climate/Culture:**

Toll Gate Elementary recognizes each student and staff member as a leader. The 7 Habits of Happy Kids are the foundation of our success and are part of everyday conversations and actions. A leadership badge is awarded to a student in each classroom on a daily basis. Students are selected to receive the badge for demonstrating behaviors aligning to the 7 habits, and leadership passports are used to track data related to continuous demonstration of the habits. Students wear the badge for the day and are congratulated by staff and other students. Parent notes sharing this honor are sent home daily, resulting in over 2,000 positive home school connections made each school year. Our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) implementation is built around the 7 habits, with the counselor reinforcing the habits in monthly lessons in each classroom. Toll Gate adopted a Gator mascot who helps reinforce the 7 habits with CHOMPS-Choosing Habits Only Makes People Stronger. Students watch inspiring videos, celebrate student success, review progress toward school-wide goals, and enjoy connecting as a community at a monthly Gator Gathering. Celebrations are also a part of the daily announcements at Toll Gate, including recognizing Problem of the Week winners, AR Goal Achievers, Newbery Award Winners, and student and staff birthdays.

It is our belief that every child is special and unique, and given the opportunity to showcase their strengths and talents, students will thrive as leaders. Leadership Teams meet twice a month and include all students in first through fourth grade. Students complete an annual survey to select their team of choice. Each team is facilitated by staff members and parents who share a passion for their team's focus. We offer a wide range of teams that allow students to engage in planning and implementing school-wide projects, community service, or exploring potential interests. In addition to facilitating student leadership teams, staff members participate in self-selected action teams. Through these teams, staff members have opportunities to contribute to our school progress and success in ways that are personally meaningful. These contributions and the dedication of the Toll Gate staff do not go unnoticed. From words of appreciation and encouragement from administrators to PTO dinners and gifts of appreciation, frequent recognition is given to staff, ensuring that they are of value. Both certified and support staff members are nominated annually to receive a district Pride of Pickerington award. This provides an opportunity for staff to acknowledge and appreciate one another's contributions to our school and district.

2. **Engaging Families and Community:**

Providing leadership opportunities is an integral part of who we are as a school, and Toll Gate offers students opportunities to practice leadership at school and community events. At the district's annual Celebration of Excellence and State of Schools event, students have presented STEM learning and leadership team projects. During a symposium attended by over one hundred educators, students shared the purpose and process of creating classroom mission statements, displayed and explained leadership notebooks, and led tours. When Toll Gate sought community support to purchase supplies to build a Taiko drum, students created a video explaining the project and asking local businesses for assistance. The video, first viewed by a Home Depot manager, resulted in a donation of over $750.00 worth of supplies. The culmination of the project was a schoolwide assembly also attended by families and the Home Depot manager. Students performed drum compilations and shared information about the building process and musical selections performed.

Toll Gate recognizes the value and importance of building and nurturing family and community relationships. During monthly Community Career Exploration presentations, community members connect their careers to Toll Gate's habits of success. Presenters enjoy the interactions with our students and home school connections are established. One student, citing a desire to show appreciation for veterans, planned a Veteran's Day Luncheon, which has since become an annual event. Families are invited and look forward to annual Lunch with a Loved One events, where they are welcomed by school staff and enjoy a special lunch with their children. Near the end of the school year, a Celebration of Learning event is held that includes musical performances, visual art displays, and presentations of projects and learning experiences.

These special nights provide families a snapshot of how much their children have grown throughout the school year. Students, staff, and families come together to celebrate student growth and success. Toll Gate also gives back to the community. Students and families donate generously during annual toy, book, and food pantry drives, and tabs are collected for Ronald McDonald House Charities. Several student leadership teams have a community outreach focus, with students engaged in activities and projects such as raking leaves, creating games and cards for senior citizens and troops, and raising money for a local animal shelter.

Toll Gate has a highly involved PTO that works closely with the principal to support the school through educational assemblies, Carnival, Mother/Son events, Father/Daughter Dances, Movie Nights, a field day, and parent seminars featuring local experts discussing current parenting topics. Students are often involved in presenting information about curriculum and are engaged as decision makers in PTO outcomes.

3. **Professional Development:**

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." - Benjamin Franklin

Toll Gate teachers and administrators find the implementation of this quote to be a guiding philosophy in developing quality learning experiences for our students and staff. The prevailing ideology suggests that we learn best when we collaborate with each other and that our learning is deepened when we experience new technology, innovative learning strategies, and contemporary learning structures.

With these ideals in mind, district wide professional development focuses on establishing collective goals. Collaboration occurs annually at an Innovation Conference where teachers select multiple sessions that include extensions to curriculum like Wit & Wisdom or strategies such as Blended Learning, DOK Questioning, and Google. These sessions are led by teachers, administrators, and subject experts. These instructors provide a deep level of relevant learning and are aware of the district culture and learning needs of staff and students.

Professional development is embedded as teachers and administrators engage in collaborative work during monthly two hour delays and weekly one hour meetings. These afford time to delve into a variety of curriculum programs including Wit & Wisdom, Fundations, Lucy Calkins' Writing, Eureka Math, ST Math, Zearn, and Prodigy. Teachers collaborate with grade level colleagues to discuss curriculum frameworks, identify methods to implement curriculum to meet the educational needs of gifted, ELL, special education, and minority students, and analyze data related to the effectiveness of instruction. Teachers and administrators work to integrate technology into students' lives as they grow and become the workforce of the 21st century. During the 2018-2019 school year, Toll Gate will be a one-to-one building with each student having an iPad or Chromebook. In preparation, our professional development has included training related to best practices for blended learning.

Toll Gate realizes the challenges teachers early in their careers face in developing and growing their teaching practices. New teachers (resident educators) are assigned a mentor who has completed training. The resident educators also meet as a cohort for peer support. New teachers are valued and every effort is made to validate their contributions as well as provide learning opportunities for growth while welcoming them into a supportive community of educational professionals.

Book studies that are relevant to student learning are offered for credit at Toll Gate by the Instructional Coach including Jan Richardson's book, The Next Step in Guided Reading. Some other book studies have included Understanding by Design, The Seven Habits of Happy Kids, and Lucy Calkins' Units of Study for Teaching Writing K-8.

Toll Gate teachers and administrators are highly involved in their own growth and professional development. They seek to inspire students to be lifelong learners, and they model this for our school population.

4. **School Leadership:**

Leadership is a shared endeavor at Toll Gate Elementary, and "Growing Leaders" applies to students and staff alike. All staff members serve on action teams that enhance our school-wide initiatives and celebrates Toll Gate's successes. Another way this is accomplished is through our Building Leadership Team (BLT). BLT consists of grade level and special education representatives, instructional coach, and administrators. During monthly meetings, the team shares and analyzes schoolwide data, identifies common trends, and determines action steps to close the gap of our subgroups. BLT members lead grade level data analysis discussions during Teacher Based Team (TBT) meetings. During TBT meetings, teachers identify student strengths and needs based on grade level data, develop action plans to address areas of need, and plan for post-assessments to determine progress. TBTs also identify areas of need, which are brought back to the BLT, providing effective two-way communication. This year our BLT team added leading professional development to its leadership role. This expanded our strong foundation of professional development leadership that includes an instructional coach, a gifted instructional coach, and two administrators who value and appreciate their roles as instructional leaders.

Another example of shared leadership at Toll Gate is our approach to student discipline. The school counselor, principal, and assistant principal share a common philosophy of problem-solving before discipline is issued. We work collaboratively to talk with students, address behavior concerns, and identify next steps. For our team, our end in mind is focusing on the life lesson to be gained from their behavioral choices. We also check in on students whom we have seen in the office, work with teachers to identify and implement supports to encourage appropriate behavior, and celebrate with students when they accomplish a behavior goal or are simply making better choices.

Student leadership teams provide an opportunity for shared leadership with students, parents, and other community members. This year, several leadership teams are co-facilitated by a staff member, parent or community member. Through these teams, students share in the planning of school-wide events such as our Gator Gathering and Celebration of Learning, connecting with the community through service projects.

Toll Gate provides opportunities through leadership of professional development, decision making, and shared leadership to empower others to set, practice, and share in both sound instructional practices and to meet the academic, emotional, and social opportunities for students and to improve student learning in all of these areas.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Toll Gate provides students with opportunities for personalized learning via student centered data collection, analysis and goal setting. Through a complete and continuous data management system, both teachers and students reflect on progress towards goals with a focus on improving student learning. Students and teachers work collaboratively to provide feedback and allow time for reflection of strategies used toward goal attainment. In this way, both teachers and students mirror the Ohio Improvement Process of using data to identify needs, developing goals and action steps to implement, and evaluating evidence of impact to close gaps to improve learning.

Toll Gate continuously uses this data management system in all school operations. It begins with adult implementation in both BLT and TBTs and it filters down through student leadership notebooks and hallway displays. "I Can" statements and state standards are posted with all student work providing a direct correlation between purpose and expected results.

A collection of school wide data in math, reading and related arts are clearly visible in Toll Gate's hallways and progress towards goals is continuously updated and discussed through two way communication as students engage in active reflection. STEM projects are also displayed with reflection statements on the design process of ask, plan, design, improve. QR coding is used with student work to give an interactive opportunity for students to observe others recorded presentations. Specific verbal/written feedback is used to improve speaking and listening skills related to these oral presentations.

A home school connection is made using this system as students describe to their parents and others the specific strategies they used to improve their learning. This solidifies and internalizes the understanding of the data as students practice their analysis and interpretation in a setting beyond the classroom. Students have also presented Toll Gate's school data at school board and PTO meetings. This is another opportunity for students to practice speaking skills that enhance present and future success and college and career readiness.

The data management system used here at Toll Gate has shaped how students and staff take responsibility for learning. The continuous process of reviewing data, identifying strategies and evaluating progress has made a systemic change at Toll Gate. It has changed the mindset of both teachers and students. Teachers have improved instruction as they use data to personalize learning opportunities for students. Students have become more focused on their learning path and are able to articulate their progress. Parents are better able to understand the power of goal setting and various pathways their children can use. Ultimately Toll Gate has seen an overall improvement in student achievement as we continue to strive towards closing the gap for all students.