

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 Dr. Karin E. Coiner

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

Official School Name Sunrise Estates Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 171 Sunrise Drive

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

City Irwin State PA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 15642-8801

County Westmoreland

Telephone (724) 864-6700 Fax _____

Web site/URL http://sr.penntrafford.org E-mail coinerk@penntrafford.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. Matthew Harris E-mail harrism@penntrafford.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Penn-Trafford School District Tel. (724) 744-4496

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. Martin Stovar
(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 (per district designation):
- 5 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2016 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	52	0	52
1	42	0	42
2	50	0	50
3	49	0	49
4	58	0	58
5	54	0	54
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	305	0	305

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 1 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 93 % White
 - 3 % 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: 3%

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 <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	5
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2015 until the end of the 2015-2016 school year	4
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	9
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2015	315
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.029
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
1 Total number ELL

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

Haitian Creole

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 13 %
Total number students who qualify: 40
8. Students receiving special education services: 9 %
27 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
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	16
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a licensed professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
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 19:1
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	97%	97%	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.

EAST: Where the SunRises - Empowering All Students Together

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

Sunrise Estates Elementary is one of five elementary schools within the Penn-Trafford School District in Pennsylvania. We are a unique “neighborhood” school situated in the western PA suburbs of Pittsburgh servicing the supportive, hard working middle class families of the area. Currently, Sunrise has just over 300 students from kindergarten to fifth grade and offers many support systems in order for our students to be successful. Our community and parents are actively involved in our students’ education and willingly participate in school activities, events, and programs. Over the last five years, we have worked exceptionally hard at improving our own practice through improved teaching and learning. With this focus on doing what is best for students, we have worked together to create a system that not only customizes learning for each child, but also strives to help students become well-rounded and adjusted children. This system has allowed us to grow and improve beyond what we thought possible. As our state testing results show, Sunrise Elementary has slowly moved up the ladder of expectations to be ranked #4 in the state of Pennsylvania in 2016 for achievement and growth in english language arts, mathematics, and science among all state elementary schools. We have also been recognized for our SAP (Student Assistance Program) program (which we call SMILE) and our teachers have presented at local SAP conferences.

The journey Sunrise has taken started with a small pilot program and turned into a building wide initiative. We have transformed the way we educate students to put a focus on flexible grouping and individualizing education. We meet student needs through targeted interventions, a team approach, and professional learning communities focused on data driven, collaborative team planning. Our school uses flexible grouping strategies in both reading and math with a focus on common teaching time across a grade level. Not only do the teachers have time to plan with each other, they also have time where the entire grade teaches reading and math at the same time. Teachers use pre-test data to analyze the skill attainment of the grade level students and then flexible group the students across all grade level teachers for each skill or standard. Students move in and out of groups frequently based on what they need, and data drives the instruction and learning. Teachers use common planning time and Professional Learning Communities to plan out units, lessons, and grade level goals. We have found that when we use the data available to us, we are meeting students’ individual needs instead of traditional whole group instruction. The flexible grouping process has become a way of life for our staff, students, and parents. Our teachers have stated they would never teach any other way. Parents have experienced it through their children and recognize this is how we educate our students and support us through this process.

When flexible grouping, our district discovered that we needed to completely overhaul the math and reading standards in order to create district-developed timelines, standards driven expectations, and more skill based instruction. Sunrise teachers were a key component of this initiative and took ownership of holding themselves accountable to meeting the expectations placed on us by the state and district. Our teachers now use the timelines to drive their instruction.

Sunrise focuses on more than just the academic growth of our students. Through our SMILE team (Sunrise Monitors Individual Learning Experiences), the SAP process is a valued program. Our SMILE team meets once a week and is a tireless group of volunteers that believes in the process of eliminating all boundaries to a child’s growth and learning. We focus on emotional health, family crisis, academic struggles, behavioral needs, and physical challenges. Team members share ideas, ask for support from outside agencies, seek help from the school counselor and district school psychologist, and also follow the philosophy of ‘try, try again’. We believe that our SMILE team has helped many children overcome boundaries to learning continue to provide the most support we can to each caseload. We have found that engaging families in their child’s education is a primary focus for us in helping students succeed. Helping families find the resources they need and supporting them through tough times creates a relationship in which both family and school recognize that we just want what is best for each child.

Finally, we also strive to help our students develop into 21st Century Learners and strive every day to incorporate creative, problem solving, collaborative, and engaging learning experiences for our students. We want them to be able to thrive beyond K-12 and feel that through more authentic learning experiences, students will be better prepared for life. To do this, we have incorporated weekly STEAM lessons in each

grade and students are challenged to problem solve and create solutions to common problems. Failure is celebrated and revisions to attempts are applauded. Our newly renovated science lab has become a room of creativity and students learn to work in teams in a beneficial learning environment. Teachers also focus on project based learning in other subject areas and have learned to try to give students more opportunities for non-traditional learning.

This is just a snapshot of all the great work that represents the students, staff, and community of Sunrise Estates Elementary. We are honored and humbled to even be considered for this award. It is one small way to validate all the hard work and effort we put in to everything we do, day in and day out, in order to make a difference in the lives of children. Thank you!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

The curriculum in each of the four main subject areas focuses on rigorous attainment of skills and opportunities to provide authentic 21st Century Learning experiences for each child. Civic learning and engagement is attained through participation in a variety of activities and programs offered to our students during the year. Here is a summary of each subject area as well as opportunities for civic learning.

1. Reading/English Language Arts. Our ELA curriculum focuses on PA state standards from the PA Core. Curricular decisions are made by using the standards to align what skills need to be taught each year. Skills do spiral in ELA and a common vocabulary has become a focus for ELA so that students are exposed at an earlier age. By incorporating a balanced literacy approach, guided reading becomes a main focus by using flexible grouping strategies and running record assessments to accurately pinpoint a child's reading level and instruct them on that level daily. We also recognize the value of teaching reading through novels, instead of a textbook. Teachers are expected to know what skills and strategies are accountable in each grade level and teach those skills and strategies through a novel. This engages students and allows for authentic learning. Not only is reading instruction of primary importance, but also writing is as well. We feel that the more frequent we offer writing experiences for students, the less challenging and laborious writing becomes. Students write in all subject areas and journaling is essential in the primary grades. A writing guideline was developed in the building that is built upon as students move up on the grades. TEXXI, as we call it, has become a focus for writing and supports students in the writing process.

2. Our math curriculum was a disorganized and unfocused several years ago. We discovered that we needed to completely overhaul the math standards in order to create district-developed timelines, standards driven expectations, and more skill based instruction. Our math curriculum is now based on PA state standards from the PA Core, however, it is uniquely our own document generated from scratch by our district. The curriculum identifies units of study, topics within each unit, standards in each topic, and approximate length of time for each topic. This allows teachers to use any teaching method they deem appropriate to meet the needs of students, but holds them accountable to the skills and standards that are expected of them to teach. Many teachers at Sunrise do not use a textbook. Instead, they plan engaging lessons that help students learn and apply the skills, often in real life experiences. Project based learning is common in math. We also incorporate writing through the explanation of students' math work.

3. Our science curriculum was also recently updated to look similar to the math timeline. We used the state standards and aligned the science expectations across grades 3, 4, and 5. Similar to math, there are units of study, topics in each unit, standards for each topic, and each section has a suggested timeline to help teachers focus and address all necessary skills. Through science lessons, we also strive to help our students develop into 21st Century Learners and strive every day to incorporate creative, problem solving, collaborative, and engaging learning experiences for our students. To do this, we have incorporated weekly STEAM lessons in each grade and students are challenged to problem solve and create solutions to common problems. Failure is celebrated and revisions to attempts are applauded. Our newly renovated science lab has become a room of creativity and students learn to work in teams in a beneficial learning environment. In grades 1-5, students are also exposed to EiE (Engineering is Elementary) kits and lessons multiple times a year. These units match skills and topics that are expected for each corresponding grade.

4. Our social studies curriculum focuses on themes. Using state standards as a guide, we focus on themes such as Neighborhoods, Our Community, PA History, States and Regions, and American History. However, we incorporate many opportunities for current event discussions, readings, and access to student news. This is done through the use of Studies Weekly Newspapers, CNN student news, and Weekly Readers through Scholastic News. These are used to support and supplement the social studies curriculum. Students engage in plays, projects, and research during social studies lessons in order to better engage in the learning. With regard to civic learning, activities are planned thought the year to help support this type of engagement. For example, students participated in a mock election in Nov of 2016 where all students K-5 voted for the next President. Student also experience lessons each month where they learn about a particular

character trait and then vote for a student in their room that has displayed that trait over the month. Students are given the opportunity to fill out anonymous notes to recognize kindness in others that are then displayed on a bulletin board. Sunrise also has multiple charity events throughout the year, just a few examples are: The Giving Tree during the holidays, Make A Wish Macy's Letters (our district was able to grant two wishes), Book Drive for WV Flood Victims, Food Drive for local food banks (winning classroom stocks the shelves at the Food Bank), Backpack program (food provided in backpacks to families in need twice a month), and a day to recognize Stomp Out Bullying.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Similar to the four core subject areas, the other curriculum areas are an essential piece of a well-rounded learning experience for students and encourage creativity and opportunities for attainment of skills that provide authentic 21st Century Learning for each child. All of our K-5 students get to experience PE, music, art, library, career readiness, and technology. Our grade 4/5 students have a course titled Library Media. Here is a summary of each opportunity.

1. Art. Students in Kindergarten focus on art projects and skills that work on fine motor skills, hand and eye coordination, and also creativity of their own design. This occurs at least twice a week. Kindergarten students are even given the opportunity to work with upper grade students to partner together in order to create an art project, once a week. Students in grades 1-5 have an art class, once a week with an art teacher, where they are taught style of art, famous artists, and art history. Students have opportunities to use a kiln for pottery, plaster for masks, weaving with looms, pictures for dimensional paintings, and even large scale full grade level projects that replicate famous art pieces of history.

2. PE. Students in K-5 have a PE class with a gym teacher once a week. Students learn warm up exercises and activities to be able to adapt and improve in their ability to perform these basic, but necessary movements to learn to maintain good fitness. Occasionally, students can choose an activity such as basketball, jump rope, hula-hoops, scooters, etc. In addition, students learn a variety of basic sports, such as baseball, basketball, kickball, timed running, and even get to participate in the Marine Corp Fitness Tests. Students engage with the teacher how the games they play and exercises they learn apply to sports they play outside of school. Students are also exposed to Healthy Choices, which included the dangers of tobacco, sun safety, as well as the importance of eating nutritious foods and being physically active.

3. Music. Students in grades K-5 have a music class with a music teacher once a week. Our students not only sing and dance during music class, but they also are given unique learning opportunities to engage with music in different ways. Most importantly, cross-curricular connections are made from the music being taught to a subject that can be connected (history, math, science, or even language arts). Basics are taught from understanding beats, how to read music by learning the notes and rests, and listening so they can follow along when singing. 4th graders are given the opportunity to play recorders and use synth kits to make their own music. Little Bits Kits have been used to build sounds and understand sound waves. Percussion and all wind and brass instruments are introduced during class for third graders. 4th and 5th graders are given the opportunity to play an instrument, in addition to music class during the week.

4. Technology. Technology is not a class. However, 21st Century technology skills are embedded into daily learning activities for the students. Our school encourages students to engage with carts of iPads filled with learning apps. We also have Chromebook carts in which all students have access to email, Google apps, and online learning tools. Teachers encourage group projects using Google Drive and also sharing of files. Students can create videos, use YouTube for information, learn how to research, type information, and also present to the class in multiple different modes. Students are immersed in technology for alternative learning options as well, all of which are embedded into the experiences for all grade levels.

5. Library and Library Media. All students, grades K-5, are provided with one class a week in which they spend that time in the library. They can read books, magazines, search for new interests, be read to by the library aide, or even participate in Accelerated Reader by quizzing on books that they have read independently. Additionally, students in grades 4/5 have a class once a week that focuses on media. Students learn how to use media to complete research, learn the many options available for media sources,

and also work in collaborative teams to complete projects using different forms of media.

6. Career Readiness. All students in grades K-5 are provided opportunities to be exposed to different careers and also learn about careers. This is completed through the CC Spark program and also with assistance from the librarian and school counselor. Students explore and have conversations about careers once a month. In addition, once every quarter, students complete some type of writing in class that focuses in some way on careers. This concludes with a formal Career Day at the school at the end of the year in May.

3. Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Assessments:

Over the last five years, we have worked exceptionally hard at improving our own practice through improved teaching and learning. With this focus on doing what is best for students, we have worked together to create a system that not only customizes learning for each child, but also strives to help students become well-rounded and adjusted children. This system has allowed us to grow and improve beyond what we thought possible. In doing so, we feel that we have been able to meet students' needs at all levels - for below, on, and above grade level.

The journey Sunrise has taken started with a small pilot program and turned into a building wide initiative. We have transformed the way we educate students to put a focus on flexible grouping and individualizing education. We meet student needs through targeted interventions, a team approach, and professional learning communities focused on data driven, collaborative team planning. Our school uses flexible grouping strategies in both reading and math with a focus on common teaching time across a grade level. Not only do the teachers have time to plan with each other, they also have time where the entire grade teaches reading and math at the same time.

Teachers use pre-test data to analyze the skill attainment of the grade level students and then flexible group the students across all grade level teachers for each skill or standard. Students move in and out of groups frequently based on what they need and data drives the instruction and learning. We employ a wide variety of assessment data in order to impact our instruction and planning. This includes Running Records in K-2, DIBELS in K-2, Common Assessments in Math and Reading in K-5, CDT in gr 3-5, STAR reading tests in gr 2-5, and PSSAs in gr 3-5. Teachers use common planning time and professional learning communities to plan out units, lessons, and grade level goals. We have found that when we use the data available to us, we are meeting students' individual needs instead of traditional whole group instruction.

Once students have been flex grouped, the teachers are able to differentiate in the classroom in a much more beneficial way. The flexible grouping process has become a way of life for our staff, students, and parents. Our teachers have stated they would never teach any other way. Parents have experienced it through their children and recognize this is how we educate our students and support us through this process.

When flexible grouping, our district created district-developed timelines, standards driven expectations, and more skill based instruction to benefit student learning. Sunrise teachers were a key component of this initiative and took ownership of holding themselves accountable to meeting the expectations placed on us by the state and district. Our teachers now use the timelines to drive their instruction. Within ELA instruction, by incorporating a balanced literacy approach, guided reading becomes a main focus by using flexible grouping strategies and running record assessments to accurately pinpoint a child's reading level and instruct them on that level daily. We also recognize the value of teaching reading through novels, instead of a textbook. Teachers are expected to know what skills and strategies are accountable in each grade level and teach those skills and strategies through a novel. This engages students and allows for authentic learning.

In all subject areas, teachers are encouraged to use any teaching method they deem appropriate to meet the needs of students, but use the district curriculum guides to hold them accountable to the skills and standards that are expected of them to teach. Many teachers at Sunrise do not use a textbook. Instead, they plan engaging lessons that help students learn and apply the skills, often in real life experiences. Project based learning is common in math and social studies. Through all subject areas and lessons, we also strive to help our students develop into 21st Century Learners and strive every day to incorporate creative, problem

solving, collaborative, and engaging learning experiences for our students. To do this in science, we have incorporated weekly STEAM lessons in each grade and students are challenged to problem solve and create solutions to common problems.

21st Century technology skills are embedded into daily learning activities for the students. Our school encourages students to engage with iPads, Chromebooks, and online resources and curriculum interventions. Students have access to email, Google apps, and online learning tools. Teachers encourage group projects using Google Drive and also sharing of files. Students can create videos, use YouTube for information, learn how to research, type information, and also present to the class in multiple different modes. Students are immersed in technology for alternative learning, including project-based learning, all of which are embedded into the experiences for all grade levels.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

An area of focus for Sunrise Elementary is centered on school culture and mindset. Teachers work within an existing shared culture and present shared beliefs, values, and norms regarding a school experience to the students they educate and also to the parents and staff through their actions and conversations. These cultural norms potentially impact students' perceptions of their own abilities and the likelihood that they will stay motivated within their learning. A key factor to success in the classroom comes from the mindset of the students. Teachers and parents can learn how to motivate children in ways that develop a growth mindset. If the school experience is designed to motivate students, students will have more academic success. In order to promote this culture, the Sunrise staff has spent time completing Book Studies, many of which have focused on school culture and relationships among staff and students. These books have included: "Inevitable," "The Energy Bus," "A Whole New Mind," "Who Moved My Cheese," "Soup," "Mindset," "Daily Five," "Hard Hat," and "See Me After Class."

Over the last five years, we have worked exceptionally hard at improving our own practice through improved teaching and learning. With this focus on doing what is best for students, we have worked together to create a system that not only customizes learning for each child, but also strives to help students become well-rounded and adjusted children. This system has allowed us to grow and improve beyond what we thought possible. The unique process of flexible grouping that we employ daily in reading and math was developed by the teachers in order to improve the process of addressing the imbalance and lack of student growth across all student ability levels in mathematics and reading. We are constantly trying to improve the building culture in order to create a culture that promotes flexible grouping habits, accurately analyzes data to increase student learning, trains the staff on flexible grouping techniques, and increases the planning and collaboration time within grade level teams. Through this process, we feel that students are more engaged and motivated to learn.

Sunrise also continues to focus on the social and emotional growth of our students. Through our SMILE team (Sunrise Monitors Individual Learning Experiences), the SAP process is a valued program. Our SMILE team meets once a week and is a tireless group of volunteers that believes in the process of eliminating all boundaries to a child's growth and learning. We focus on emotional health, family crisis, academic struggles, behavioral needs, and physical challenges. Team members share ideas, ask for support from outside agencies, seek help from the school counselor and district school psychologist, and also follow the philosophy of 'try, try again'. We believe that our SMILE team has helped many children overcome boundaries to learning continue to provide the most support we can to each caseload. We have found that engaging families in their child's education is a primary focus for us in helping students succeed. Helping families find the resources they need and supporting them through tough times creates a relationship in which both family and school recognize that we just want what is best for each child.

Lastly, with the help of our school counselor, we engage the students in monthly character lessons for all students in grades K-5. We focus on one character trait a month. Students learn about this trait, do activities surrounding the trait, and then vote for the student in their class that most resembled that trait over the course of the month. Those students are then recognized through our "Worthy Warrior" program and celebrated for best displaying the trait, as voted on by their peers. This is just one more way to promote a positive school culture, show students that we value good decisions, and ultimately generate a more beneficial and safe learning environment for all.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our community and parents are actively involved in our students' education and willingly participate in school activities, events, and programs. We have found that engaging families in their child's education is a primary focus for us in helping students succeed. We engage families in two main ways. First, helping families find the resources they need and supporting them through tough times creates a relationship in which both family and school recognize that we just want what is best for each child. Second, involving

parents and the community help us to offer more opportunities and rich learning experiences for our students during the year. We have an outstanding PTO in which parents and family help to support our academics and experiences for our children. The PTO supports our Accelerated Reader program, holds fundraisers for monetary support, sponsors a Spelling Bee, A Talent Show, an Education Fair (similar to a science fair), organizes Book It, holds a Family Game Night, offers After School Movies, runs a School Store, hosts a Ceramic event twice a year, hosts special parties during the year, helps the students appreciate Veteran's, Recognizes Red Ribbon Week, and runs the Food Drive. With our focus on careers, we have planned a large Career Day at the school at the end of the year in May. This Career Day allows any adults in various careers to come to the school and share their life experiences with the students in a full day rotation. We invite parents, family members, neighbors, friends, and community guests. It is a great learning experience for students and also a fantastic way to welcome the community into our doors. All of these events offer so many wonderful opportunities for our students and help to keep a strong connection between our families and the school.

Here are some examples of working with community for success and improvement: We have assemblies, programs, classes, and organizations come throughout the years that focus on various community items and causes. We have had the Carnegie Science Center come to present, our local Credit Union comes once a month to all students to "save" into accounts created, the Boy Scouts come and present their program to students, local veteran's have come to explain flag etiquette, we have honored our local veteran's for their service, Kids on the Block has come and discussed various disabilities, local organizations come and teach classes (Bee Kind, Blackburn, and St. Vincent), Officer Phil runs a program for our young students, and we celebrate Read Across America by having HS students create and show videos to students on favorite children's novels. In addition, we support student needs through school based mental health programs, resources offered through the SAP program, and a multitude of tutoring options that we are able to offer during the school year.

To help our students understand how they are capable of impacting the community around them, Sunrise has multiple charity events throughout the year. Students are involved in helping to support them and learn what their generosity and kindness provides others. Just a few examples are: The Giving Tree during the holidays, Make A Wish Macy's Letters (our district was able to grant two wishes), Book Drive for WV Flood Victims (we sent books to the families and schools devastated by the floods), Food Drive for local food banks (the winning classroom takes the food, which is often over 2000 items and stocks the shelves at the Food Bank), Backpack program (food provided in backpacks to families in need twice a month), and days in school to recognize Stomp Out Bullying and Children's Grief Awareness.

Finally, we connect with families and the community by keeping them informed of what is happening at Sunrise. We keep our website up to date with tons of information and resources. We use a 'Take Home Tuesday' format to post informational flyers and updates each Tuesday to the website and also email out the information. We send frequent texts and emails using an online system (Connect Ed) to inform parents of events. Our school has an online grading system (Powerschool) in which parents can log in and receive up to date grades and academic progress, along with attendance. We send quarterly report cards and mid quarter progress notes. We host parent nights, Open House events, academic showcases, and also run a school wide Twitter account that parents use to find out all the current events of the school.

3. Professional Development:

Sunrise has the ability to offer the staff many different forms of professional development in addition to the district professional development plan. Due to the Professional Learning Community model, teachers have professional development time for collaboration, planning, and information sessions each day for 30 minutes. At least twice a week, teachers meet in grade level teams to discuss standards, assessments, data analysis, and planning. Other days of the week, Sunrise offers a variety of educator improvement options. At least once a month, the building has technology trainings and ideas to share with staff. Once a month, we have new teacher / non-tenured meetings to support our newest employees. Once a month, we host a book study meeting and talk about the next few chapters of this particular year's book focus in order to discuss how it impacts teaching and learning. Our district employs two staff members that are instructional coaches and they visit the school frequently to offer support and guidance when it comes to standards

alignment, lesson planning, data analysis, 21st Century skills, flexible grouping, and individualizing instruction. They are also experts with technology and support those needs as well. It is because of this time built into our school day, that our staff has grown in its own capacity to learn and grow from each other. They become teacher leaders and learn to share their expertise with their colleagues, as well as the school leader. Doors are not meant to be closed to each other and instead open to share ideas, thoughts, and challenges. We have used the phrase 'Fail Forward' to encourage teachers to try new ideas and learn from mistakes.

The district continues to offer site visits to other schools, in-services focusing on standards alignment, curriculum building, incorporation of technology into instruction, and also a focus on 21st Century skills into lesson planning and student learning. Our district discovered that we needed to completely overhaul the math and reading standards in order to create district-developed timelines, standards driven expectations, and more skill based instruction. Sunrise teachers were a key component of this initiative and took ownership of holding themselves accountable to meeting the expectations placed on us by the state and district. Our teachers now use the timelines to drive their instruction. These initiatives then carry over into the conversations and collaboration of the teachers when they meet in their own meetings and professional development sessions.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy of the school is one in which everyone is capable of being a leader. Empowering all staff to be leaders is what encourages innovation, creativity, teamwork and collaboration. This leadership philosophy allows the staff to share new ideas, training, and support in more formal staff meetings in order to benefit the whole building and organization instead of just one or two people. The school leader believes in an open door policy when it comes to discussing ideas, sharing concerns, and talking about issues. Teachers are encouraged to speak their mind and express opinions in order to better the organization. This does not always mean all ideas are then initiated, but each one is considered and discussed. Teachers are also encouraged to try new ideas and focus on improvement. As mentioned earlier, the philosophy of "Fail Forward" applies to all in the building and this encourages 21st Century learning not just on the part of the students, but also from the teachers.

In terms of structure, there is one school leader (the principal), one head teacher (teacher selected by interview), grade level team leaders (volunteers selected by their teams), and all other staff members. The stakeholders include each grade level teacher, the support staff, the itinerant teachers, school counselor, secretary, nurse, speech and language, and a variety of other support personnel that work in various buildings besides Sunrise. Together, the Sunrise team creates a building goal each year that supports or aims to meet one of the district goals. This goal helps to unite all the school team members to focus on one main goal. In grade level teams, the team members also create a grade level goal that helps support other areas of focus for the building and the district.

Finally, policies, programs, and resources are all focused using many systems in place for accountability. Teacher teams have to keep Professional Learning Community notes from meetings, teachers are required to complete data analysis summary sheets several times a year to summarize data results, and teachers use their own websites to post lesson plans and information, therefore holding them accountable to their own instruction. The observation and evaluation process is intense and only completed by the school leader. Walkthroughs are done at least four times a year and formal observations are in addition to that. In some cases, teachers set goals and then are held accountable to meeting those goals by the end of the year. Academic Learning outcomes are required for all teaching staff (SLOs) and this also holds teachers accountable to setting goals for student learning and attempting to reach them by the end of each year.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

As mentioned in several of the questions, over the last five years, we have worked exceptionally hard at improving our own practice through improved teaching and learning. With this focus on doing what is best for students, we have worked together to create a system that not only customizes learning for each child, but also strives to help students become well-rounded and adjusted children. This system has allowed us to grow and improve beyond what we thought possible. In doing so, we feel that we have been able to meet students' needs at all levels - for below, on, and above grade level.

The journey Sunrise has taken started with a small pilot program and turned into a building wide initiative. We have transformed the way we educate students to put a focus on flexible grouping and individualizing education. We meet student needs through targeted interventions, a team approach, and professional learning communities focused on data driven, collaborative team planning. Our school uses flexible grouping strategies in both reading and math with a focus on common teaching time across a grade level. Not only do the teachers have time to plan with each other, they also have time where the entire grade teaches reading and math at the same time.

Teachers use pre-test data to analyze the skill attainment of the grade level students and then flexible group the students across all grade level teachers for each skill or standard. Students move in and out of groups frequently based on what they need and data drives the instruction and learning. We employ a wide variety of assessment data in order to impact our instruction and planning. This includes Running Records in K-2, DIBELS in K-2, Common Assessments in Math and Reading in K-5, CDT in gr 3-5, STAR reading tests in gr 2-5, and PSSAs in gr 3-5. Teachers use common planning time and professional learning communities to plan out units, lessons, and grade level goals. We have found that when we use the data available to us, we are meeting students' individual needs instead of traditional whole group instruction.

Once students have been flex grouped, the teachers are able to differentiate in the classroom in a much more beneficial way. The flexible grouping process has become a way of life for our staff, students, and parents. Our teachers have stated they would never teach any other way. Parents have experienced it through their children and recognize this is how we educate our students and support us through this process.