

***U.S. Department of Education***  
***2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Dr. Shamarlas G. Allens

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

Official School Name Pharr Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1500 North Road SW

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

City Snellville

State GA

Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 30078-2112

County Gwinnett County

Telephone (770) 985-0244

Fax (770) 736-4516

Web site/URL <https://www.gcpsk12.org/PharrES>

E-mail shamarlas.allens@gcpsk12.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. Calvin Watts

E-

mail Calvin.Watts@gcpsk12.org

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

District Name Gwinnett County Public Schools

Tel. (678) 301-6000

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 Dr. Tarece Johnson

(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, leave blank.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. 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, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 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.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

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.

**The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.**

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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**Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.**

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 81 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
29 Middle/Junior high schools  
24 High schools  
0 K-12 schools
- 134 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

☐ Urban (city or town)  
☒ Suburban  
☐ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	51
K	111
1	131
2	133
3	113
4	120
5	113
6	0
7	0
8	0
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	772

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- |  |
|--|
| <u>0</u> % American Indian or Alaska Native          |
| <u>10</u> % Asian                                    |
| <u>40</u> % Black or African American                |
| <u>28</u> % Hispanic or Latino                       |
| <u>0</u> % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |
| <u>17</u> % White                                    |
| <u>5</u> % Two or more races                         |
| <b>100 % Total</b>                                   |

(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 2021 - 2022 school year: 21%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

At Pharr, there are students who travel out of the county for more than two weeks and return back to school. As a result of them leaving for an extended period of time they are withdrawn and then reenrolled. There is a rise of students in the ESOL enrolling throughout the school year from their native county. In addition, the students in the Pre-K and special education program enroll and withdraw due to placement for specific programs.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	99
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	62
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	161
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	770
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.21
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	21

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

African (Other), Albanian, Amharic, Amharic/Tigrinya/Tigre, Arabic, Asian (Other), Bengali, Bosnian, Burmese/Myanmar, Creole-French (Haitian), Chinese-Mandarin, Gujarati, Hmong, Persian (Farsi), Portuguese, Serbian/Croatian, Spanish, Vietnamese, French, Gbe (Adja, Aja, Ewe, Mina), Hebrew, Hindi, Malay, Nepali, Tagalog, Tigrinya, Urdu

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 24 %  
182 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 57 %

Total number students who qualify: 437

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 17 %  
Total number of students served 130

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>67</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>2</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>16</u> Developmental Delay	<u>33</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>27</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>14</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>45</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 0 %  
Total number of students served: 0

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 1

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	28
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	37
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	22
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	10

12. 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 27:1

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

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	92%	95%	96%	95%	95%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **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 2022.

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%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

Our vision at Pharr Elementary School is to educate all students to become responsible and active learners who endeavor to reach their fullest potential academically, socially, and emotionally. Pharr Elementary School is a place where staff, students, and parents work together in a collaborative community with a central focus on helping every child be successful.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.gcpsk12.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=17628>

18. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

## **PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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Pharr Elementary School is known for making magical things happen in a learning environment that is known as a wonderful place to be for students, teachers, parents and school community members. A school that is grounded on Excellence in Education. Each day we do our very best to maintain and build upon a strong, vibrant learning community with high academic expectations and social development, meeting students where they are and supporting them to reach their individual goals.

The culture at Pharr has adapted the mindset of having a school with one door and behind that door is the absolute value of success for all students. Success to us is hard work, dedication, commitment to excellence, caring for each other, looking out for each other, and being accountable for academic success daily. We embrace supporting and championing our talented teaching staff to help them experience success because their victory increases our students' chances of being successful. More importantly, it also reassures our parents that their dreams for our students are becoming a reality at Pharr.

Over the past several years, the learning environment has transformed into a diverse school community, where students, teachers, families, and PTA members work harmoniously together to support teaching and learning. As a recent Title I School, Pharr embraces the opportunity to expand meeting and reaching the learning of all students and families regardless of their socioeconomic status. We keep in the forefront of learning that over a third of the student population consists of special education self-contained classrooms with disabilities ranging from moderate to significant cognitive delays. In addition, we have increased the number of students from nine percent to twelve and a half percent in our gifted program. Lastly, we provide all students with enrichment opportunities throughout the school during computer science and STEM classes.

The PTA is deeply embedded within the Pharr community and strongly committed to providing resources to enhance teaching and learning opportunities for students. They have consistently supported teachers with classroom materials. The PTA donates each year several thousand dollars to Pharr to improve the learning environment. Pharr now has a remodeled book room and will be getting current books to be used as supplement materials in classrooms. In addition, the two sensory rooms will be updated with new materials for our students with special needs.

The custodial staff is a pillar at Pharr and does an exceptional job collaborating to support each other and the learning community. Each day the custodian team does a detailed job ensuring that the building and grounds are in excellent condition to greet students, staff, and visitors coming to Pharr. The team interacts with students giving high fives and with the staff always helping and supporting when needed during programs and throughout the school day. The teaching staff often have students write thank you notes to the custodial staff letting them know how much they are appreciated. Excellence at Pharr is a standard not just in the classroom. Through the hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence by the custodians, they consistently receive a build inspection above 99% out of 100%. The overall building inspection rating for the school year 2022/2023 is 99.4%.

The cafeteria staff is another strong attribute to the learning community at Pharr. They receive 100% on the fall and spring Health Inspection. The manager works with her staff to ensure they offer a variety of options for students and staff. In addition, they allow students to provide feedback regarding their favorite food. The manager orders Farm-to-School products that include gluten free, a variety of fresh and healthy fruits and vegetables of the student's choice and makes sure that every student has the same option. The manager has a food bar for the staff that has a variety of food. The manager works closely with teachers on creating special menus for students who are going from puree and transitioning to soft foods. Every month the manager has a specialty signature dish for a different culture for students to sample. In addition, the cafeteria staff engages students in different school nutrition programs like National School Lunch, fall special treat, The Big game, National Read Across America Day, and National School Breakfast Week. The cafeteria manager works closely with the After School Program to make sure all after school programs at Pharr have snacks for students.



The excellent work of student character is on display daily at Pharr. As a direct result, the School Board recognized Pharr as a Distinguished Positive Behavioral Intervention Support (March 2023) school and will be featured in an upcoming video representing the school district. At Pharr, we are developing critical and creative thinkers with sharp minds for the future leaders of America. Our teacher leaders continue to support our students to be their best. During the school district's Readers Rally competition, our students finished in third place out of over thirty elementary schools.

At Pharr, a key strategy that we use to encourage and challenge students to strive to their full potential as individuals is to create great relationships and maintain strong collaborations that have become the cornerstone. We believe that our school is about people and relationships: kids with kids; kids with staff; staff with kids; and staff with staff. This has allowed us fabulous opportunities to vigorously encourage and promote numerous programs for our students before, during, and after school. Our teacher leaders sponsor clubs that enhance unique character building for our students. The Pharr Garden is recognized as a Green and Healthy School and a National Green Ribbon School by the U. S. Department of Education. For several years, the garden has provided produce for different charity programs. The Garden Club continues to teach our students about health and nutrition as a lifestyle for life. The club is also unique for our students and teaches them the importance of giving back to our community. Pharr Rambotics participated in the Lego League competition team and won the Innovation Project Award at the Fall Regional Competition in December 2022. The team advanced to the Super Regionals competition. Their Innovation Project was to use drones launched from delivery trucks to deliver small packages while the truck driver delivered larger packages in a neighborhood.

These extracurricular activities allow students to foster trust and develop relationships that let students know how much we care about them as little people. These leadership skills are then reinforced throughout the school day in classes. As a staff, we help students experience success and develop great characteristics as student leaders inside and outside of the classroom.

One of Pharr's creative incentives is the Inchy Coin book vending machine. The Inchy Coin book vending machine started to continuously promote the love for reading and to encourage positive character development. Students are nominated for an Inchy Coin when they demonstrate acts of kindness and lead with empathy towards each other. On the morning news show, the student is recognized as to why he/she is receiving the Inchy Coin. They use the Inchy Coin to get a book of their choice from the vending machine. This was an instant success. More importantly, as a direct result of the leadership from the media specialist, Pharr was awarded \$2,500 to replenish the books for the vending machine.

At Pharr Elementary School, we have developed a culture to make magical things happen throughout the building by hard work, dedication, and a commitment to excellence in education.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

The learning standards are addressed according to Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) scope and sequence utilizing suggestions for analyzing the standards and achievement level descriptors. The vertical alignment of progression is also considered and analyzed to address learning standards. When addressing standards, teachers use effective teaching strategies, the GCPS Quality Plus Teaching Strategies along with responsive teaching, to address the needs of the students and make sure every student has the best opportunity to engage students in learning the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS). Teachers prioritize student learning needs meeting them where they are to master the AKS standards.

The instructional approaches are structured and organized to provide effective and efficient English Language Arts (ELA) instruction. The ELA block is comprised of the following instructional strategies:

- a. Direct instruction- The targeted AKS is addressed through whole group instruction. During this time, the following Quality Plus Teaching Strategies are used: modeling, questioning, and addressing background and prior knowledge.
- b. Indirect/interactive instruction- The targeted AKS is addressed through small group instruction. During the time, the following Quality Plus Teaching Strategies are used: student reflection, summarizing, reciprocal teaching, and problem-solving.
- c. Independent practice-

The formative and summative assessment data are used to identify student levels of knowledge and academic needs based on skills assessed. These assessments inform teachers what students learned, how well they learned it, and what areas they need to improve. The data becomes a working blueprint for instructional planning when determining how to effectively and efficiently differentiate student learning. Small groups are developed to target student deficiencies and to provide enrichment opportunities.

#### **1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

At Pharr Elementary School, the mathematics curriculum content is derived from the Gwinnett County Public School (GCPS) Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) Standards taught through an integrated approach of real world problem solving and life application which will in turn prepare students for College and Career Readiness. The success of Pharr Elementary school in the field of mathematics can be attributed to several factors. First the school places a strong emphasis on early mathematics education. Beginning in kindergarten, students are immersed in a math rich environment. This includes but is not limited to hands-on activities that encourage exploration, brain stimulation, problem solving, and critical thinking skills.

Pharr Elementary also has highly qualified and experienced math teachers who are trained in the latest math trends and teaching techniques in order to reach every student. For example, teachers use a balanced numeracy approach to our teaching in which students get a mini lesson, small group differentiated instruction, and summary with formal and informal assessment. Teachers at Pharr Elementary meet weekly in Collaborative Learning Teams (CLT). During this time, teachers use both formative and summative data to help us analyze the standards. We then deconstruct the standard and use backwards design to target specific standards in our remediation and enrichment time. In CLT, teachers also collaborate, share resources, and constantly look for ways to engage students and improve learning outcomes.

Another significant factor contributing to the school's success is the focus on data driven instruction. Teachers use student data to identify misconceptions, areas where students may need more support, including individualized instruction and interventions. This allows teachers to ensure that every student

receives the support that they need to succeed in math.

Finally, Pharr Elementary has a strong partnership with parents and the community. The school holds regular events and workshops in mathematics with the parents, community, and other stakeholders. The school collaborates with local businesses and organizations to provide additional support and resources for math education at Pharr.

#### **1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

Students in kindergarten to fifth grade learn science concepts in life science, physical science, and earth science. Teachers introduce each standard using the phenomenon provided on the Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) plans. District provided materials are used to create authentic lessons in which students are asked to obtain, evaluate, and communicate science concepts. Small group and collaboration activities are planned to allow time for hands-on activities. Students show creativity and their level of understanding in science through hands-on experiments as well as writing about their learning. Lessons and classes in the departmentalized grade levels are paced in such a way to provide maximum instructional time per week and avoid loss of time due to transitions. For example, to allow for a more instructional time, students attend science class every other day. In grades that do not departmentalize, an entire science unit is taught before transitioning to a social studies unit. Integration of science into other content areas allows students to apply and continue their learning of science concepts.

Science is extended beyond the classroom in many ways. Students are continually assessed throughout a unit. For example, formative assessments such as games, exit tickets, experiments, and collaboration activities are used periodically to ensure students can apply concepts taught. When taking summative assessments in upper grades students are asked to apply their factual knowledge to real world situations. In lower grades, summative assessments ask students to recall the information that provides the foundational knowledge in science.

#### **1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:**

At Pharr Elementary, the state standards and Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) are taught rigorously and with fidelity, adhering to all modalities for all students to understand civics, economics, and historical understandings. Students engage in abundant hands-on experiences, authentic peer discourse, and examining social studies through cultural lenses to enhance our curricular approach, which focuses on high achievement for all learners and developing high-level critical thinking learners of the 21st century. At Pharr Elementary, our students take part in a plethora of authentic and engaging learning experiences, such as Youth Vote, Wax Museums, and field trips that relate to our classroom curriculum. All grade levels focus on improving our school performance by being reflective and responsive teachers during our weekly collaborative learning teams when reviewing formative and summative assessments, where we establish skills, strategies, and content that needs to be refined and extended.

Our students engage in many higher-level, critical thinking opportunities that also focus on students' speaking and listening skills and allow all students to work on their public speaking and presenting skills. Our students are taught from a young age the importance of questioning, noticing, and wondering within social studies and making self and world connections. Pharr Elementary teachers integrate current events whenever possible so that students see that social studies lives beyond our classrooms and make connections from the past to the present, as students are also engaged in writing across curricular areas.

#### **1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:**

#### **1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

In both our special education preschool classes and our Play 2 Learn program, we follow the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). These standards guide teachers and parents in providing quality learning experiences for children prior to entering kindergarten, scaffolding their growth and development so they are prepared for the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) presented once they enter elementary school. GELDS is aligned with the AKS, building a foundation that recognizes each child's individual needs, community and culture. GELDS is research based, developmentally appropriate, and aimed at fostering the connection between all aspects of development including physical, emotional, social, and cognitive embracing approaches to learning, language and literacy. While the standards are arranged by age level, they are a guide to foster the development along a continuum and allow teachers and parents to meet the child where they are at their particular developmental stage. As children enter Kindergarten, we assess strengths and weaknesses using the Kindergarten Readiness Entry Profile (KREP) in order to assess the impact of early education as well as create learning goals as they transition to the AKS in the early elementary years. Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) also provides periodic guidance to Kindergarten teachers to track the students progress during the Kindergarten year. Research shows that quality, active early learning activities foster not only academic success but also physical development and motor skills, social and emotional development and improved communication, language and literacy creating lifelong learners.

## **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

### **2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)**

All students in grades Kindergarten through Fifth attend specials including Art, Music, STEM, Physical Education and Computer Science for 45 minutes each day. Daily in art, art and literature are connected through the sharing of a read aloud book that relates to the theme of our project. In addition, non-fiction short videos are shared to impart information to students to reinforce their science and social studies Academic Knowledge and Skills. The Social Studies curriculum is further advanced by the examination of political maps as we explore the art and culture from around the globe. In music class, students are introduced to various cultures from around the world. The students use a map displayed on the wall to locate each country.

Students also learn about instruments and folk dances from these countries. When we divide into groups in music, the students must figure out how many students should be in each group to make the groups even, thus reinforcing the math concept of division. Any time we work with rhythm, we are also learning about math since each note is a different value. When discussing time signatures, the students must be able to add the note values to equal the certain value in the time signature.

### **2b. Physical education/health/nutrition**

All students in grades Kindergarten through Fifth attend specials including Art, Music, STEM, Physical Education and Computer Science for 45 minutes each day. In Physical Education, students participate in a variety of physical exercises that reinforce cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and flexibility. Twice a year, students' physical health is assessed via the FitnessGram Physical Fitness Test in grades 4th and 5th. Students in 1st through 5th do height and weight twice a year. Participation in Physical Education activities improves a student's social emotional health due to the release of endorphins thereby staving off the development of depression and anxiety. To reinforce literacy, there are letters on the floor of the gym. Students participate in running races to spell words from the letters on the floor. To reinforce mathematics, students play a game called Bonus Ball. Tennis balls with numbers are spread throughout the gym and students run out and grab one.

The second student runs, grabs another and those two students must add their numbers together. To reinforce Social Studies, students participate in folk dances from countries across the world. Community skills are also developed in the participation in the Pharr school garden. Students experience the growing

process from seed to fruition. The vegetables are donated to our local food co-op which encourages generosity and character development.

**2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)**

**2d. Technology/library/media**

As an enhancement to classroom instruction, Pharr Elementary offers 1-1 Chromebook access. Students enjoy learning, practicing, and producing artifacts of learning, through multiple technology programs, such as Padlet, Nearpod, FlipGrid, GCPS Online Research Library, and GoogleSuite. The Instructional Technology and Innovation Coach conducts regularly scheduled collaborative learning sessions with classroom teachers to ensure appropriate support to their technology needs.

Regarding the Pharr Elementary Media Center, we offer an open schedule model. All classes across all grade levels, including our special needs pre-K and self-contained classes, have designated appointments each week for the purpose of learning library research and content skills and library book check out time with our media specialist, all to foster a love of reading. In addition, we incorporate PBIS into the media center by offering free books to students for academic and behavior achievements. Each morning, students produce and direct our morning news show. This production enhances their working knowledge of using technology for future career endeavors in television and broadcasting. The students write scripts, use teleprompters, cast the news anchors, and direct the news show that is broadcasted daily.

**2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share**

Students attend a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) and a Computer Science (CS) special one day each week for 45 minutes. Many essential skills are learned and practiced in these classes. Students hear read-alouds about characters that persevere through challenges, that use their creativity and curiosity to solve problems and work with others. We enrich the science and math curriculum by using projects and activities that are hands-on and collaborative. Students are taught the engineering design process (identify the problem, explore what others have done, come up with multiple designs and pick one for the first try, create, try it out, make it better) and then practice it by working on multi-week projects. They love trying out their ideas and then going back to making their projects better. The students collaborate during their projects which allows them to practice cooperation, patience, and perseverance. CS Specials teaches the students to use technologies to find solutions to problems. Principle areas of study include computing systems, network and internet, algorithms and programming, and the relationship between technology and society. Our school also has a First Lego League Robotics team. Students solve real world problems and design a robot to complete missions in a robot game. We support this team by introducing students to robotics in third through fifth grades using Lego WeDo kits, Spike Prime Kits as well as Dash Robots. This allows them to practice the coding they learn in Computer Science.

Each year, the Robotics Team participates in a county wide competition. The First Lego League competition team, Rambotics, won the Innovation Project Award at the Fall Regional Competition in December 2022. The team advanced to the Super Regionals competition. Their Innovation Project was to use drones launched from delivery trucks to deliver small packages while the truck driver delivered larger packages in a neighborhood. This would save time and fuel and therefore reduce air pollution.

**3. Academic Supports**

**3a. Students performing below grade level:**

Pharr Elementary is a high achieving school that tailor's instruction to meet the diverse needs of all students. Our instruction also meets the individual needs of each student here at Pharr. We have a school wide time slot called RAMS Time that targets individual instruction for all students. Students are grouped using data from their individual assessments (Screeners). This allows the needs of all students to be tailored including

enrichment and/or remediation.

At Pharr, we support individual students who have not met benchmark standards by the use of researched-based, district supplemental materials and interventions. To identify the individual needs we conduct a root cause analysis, which allows us to determine which interventions would best address that student's learning gap. All interventions correctly target the student's deficit. Our interventionist provides explicit instruction (modeling) in the skill along with appropriate level of challenge which allows them to utilize immediate corrective feedback. Pharr's interventions assist the student in generalizing the learned skill to their general education or other tasks.

Our interventionists are highly trained in root cause analysis which allows them to determine which interventions would target the learning gap in each of their students. Students are grouped on their individual learning gaps where their interventionists progress monitor (assess) the effectiveness of their interventions. This plan allows us to consider changing the intervention if expected growth is not seen which ensures the high rate of student success here at Pharr.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level:**

Pharr Elementary is a high achieving school that tailor's instruction to meet the diverse needs of all students. Our instruction also meets the individual needs of each student here at Pharr. We have a school wide time slot called RAMS Time that targets individual instruction for all students. Students are grouped using data from their individual assessments (Screeners). This allows the needs of all students to be tailored including enrichment and/or remediation.

In Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS), students who perform above grade level can test into the gifted and accelerated program. Gifted testing consists of students who need to achieve in either psychometrics or multiple criteria in order to qualify for the program. As of the 2022-2023 school year, criteria for gifted screening at Pharr is for students who achieve an 87% or higher in the universal screener I-Ready in math or reading. Pharr specifically is using 87% as a screening percentile to help close the achievement gap between gifted and non-gifted students. Still, students must earn a 90% or higher during a latter I-Ready diagnostic, if they have not during the diagnostic.

Gifted testing starts in kindergarten. Students will need to take any of the following assessments in order to qualify I-Ready, CogAT, NNAT3, Torrance, Gifted Evaluation Scales, or Portfolio. Gwinnett County students need to earn a 96% or better in the batteries of mental abilities, and a 90% in achievement, creativity, or motivation. Students who earn the qualifications for the program are immediately eligible.

Once students are admitted, they are a part of a grade level specific small group. CQI instruction is provided by a Georgia Professional Standards Commision(GaPSC) gifted certified educator within the building. Some of the thinking skills they learn are cognitive, divergent, visual thinking, and evaluative thinking. Starting towards the end of 3rd grade, students further apply their thinking skills into science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM). 4th and 5th grade students work more in project-based learning in Lego robotics, art history, and more.

When students are not in their CQI, they receive instruction from another GaPSC certified gifted teacher within their core curriculum. These students get higher level small group instruction in-class instruction, exposure to project based learning, and further acceleration in selected areas.

### **3c. Students with disabilities:**

Pharr Elementary is a high achieving school that tailor's instruction to meet the diverse needs of all students. Our instruction also meets the individual needs of each student here at Pharr. We have a school wide time slot called RAMS Time that targets individual instruction for all students. Students are grouped using data from their individual assessments (Screeners). This allows the needs of all students to be tailored including enrichment and/or remediation.

At Pharr Elementary, students with disabilities are served in the general curriculum through Interrelated Resource and functional curriculum through Significant/Profound Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder I and II programs. Students with disabilities are identified early through comprehensive evaluations, data collection, and analysis of response to interventions. Comprehensive evaluations include academic, psychological, and intellectual assessments as well as rating scales to measure adaptive behavior and sensory processing skills. Once identified, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are developed for each student with goals and objectives to target their specific needs.

At Pharr Elementary, all students with disabilities receive specialized instruction from highly qualified special education teachers. Reading achievement gaps are addressed through programs utilizing Orton Gillingham multisensory approach including SPIRE and Wilson Reading. Students also have access to Amplify Reading which creates a personalized path of instruction to address reading needs. Math achievement gaps are addressed using programs such as Touch Math and iReady Math. Students on a functional curriculum also utilize the Unique Learning program, MobyMax, and Boom Cards to learn foundational reading, writing, and math skills. Special educators receive tailored training in the effective implementation of these programs.

Special educators also receive training in the use of assistive technologies to provide students with disabilities access to the curriculum. This includes devices which aid in communication, sensory processing, and daily living skills. These areas are also supported by the availability of a sensory room which provides students with unique multisensory experiences. In addition, students working on a functional curriculum receive instruction in a functional skills room where they can practice necessary life skills. These students are also required to participate in community-based instruction to learn functional community and life skills such as retail shopping and dining at a restaurant which require making choices, staying with a group, handling money, and socially appropriate behavior. These activities and instructional methods help students attain functional life skills to prepare them for independent living beyond school.

At Pharr Elementary, student progress on IEP goals and objectives are measured using a variety of data collection methods including teacher created probes, classroom and district assessments, and observations. Students on a functional curriculum also participate in the Georgia Alternative Assessment to measure their acquisition of functional skills. General curriculum students with disabilities participate in all standardized testing including CogAT, IOWA, GMAS, and iReady Diagnostic Screeners to measure their growth and achievement compared to the national norm.

### **3d. English Language Learners:**

Pharr Elementary is a high achieving school that tailor's instruction to meet the diverse needs of all students. Our instruction also meets the individual needs of each student here at Pharr. We have a school wide time slot called RAMS Time that targets individual instruction for all students. Students are grouped using data from their individual assessments (Screeners). This allows the needs of all students to be tailored including enrichment and/or remediation.

At Pharr Elementary, we use the Pull-Out, Cluster, and Push-In delivery models to tailor instruction to meet the language instructional needs of ELL (English Language Learner) students. Students in grades kindergarten through three are scheduled for one 45-minute segment of ELL services. Students in grades four and five are scheduled for two segments of ELL services.

The Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS) assessment results are used to make data-driven decisions about ELL students. Once the data has been disaggregated, the lowest performing ELL students (language proficiency levels 1 and 2) are identified. The cross-grade level group of students are served in a 45-minute Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) intervention block at the beginning of the instructional day. A web-based adaptive computer program that delivers individualized instruction in either English or the student's native language is used as an intervention tool. Students take an assessment at the beginning of the year that determines their placement in the program. Activities such as phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and reading comprehension strategies are integrated in the lessons that address all four language domains (reading, speaking, listening,

and writing). Students are given opportunities to read books at their level, write responses to texts read in a digital journal, and record themselves reading. This pull-out model is one resource used to help close the achievement gap.

Teachers at Pharr ES create an ELPP (English Learner Proficiency Plan) as a tool to individualize instruction and testing accommodations for students. The ELPP helps teachers understand what students should be able to do at each proficiency level. Educators differentiate instruction for ELL learners by providing explicit instruction on academic vocabulary, using pictures to build background knowledge, incorporating partner talks during classroom discussions, using sentence frames and word banks to support language acquisition.

**3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:**



## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

At the start of each morning, teachers and staff members are encouraged to greet students at the door by name. This practice aligns with our Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) expectations. As a Distinguished PBIS school, we use a tiered approach to support students' academic, behavior, and social growth. Each morning we engage students with our PBIS code of conduct: I am a Pharr Ram. I respect others. I accept responsibility for my actions. I model kindness. Students are recognized for exhibiting positive expectations around the building and on the school bus.

In addition to being a Distinguished PBIS school. Our Kindergarten and First Grade students engage in Joyful Learning. Joyful Learning is an early elementary initiative that focuses on building students' creativity and problem-solving skills through play. This initiative seeks to develop students' academic, social, and emotional growth. Students can use academic language to describe structures, their building or patterns of development.

This year, the Grayson cluster schools held the inaugural Grayson Student Leadership Conference. This was a fabulous opportunity for students to actively engage with other student leaders at the different elementary, middle, and high schools within the cluster. Students attended sessions focusing on character traits, building your positive brand. The focus was building on the power of Yet. How having a growth mindset can positively impact your future. These sessions provided students with increasing their understanding of how to apply their leadership skills as life lessons.

At Pharr, we developed a culture to celebrate our Exceptional Children each day. We have students in PreK-5th grade that have disabilities. We encourage our students to celebrate their differences and create a culture of inclusivity. Throughout our exceptional children's week, each GenEd classroom partnered with a small group Special Education Classroom. The classrooms developed book buddies and explored strategies to engage students that learn differently than them. The teaching staff believe in engaging students and meeting them where they are to enhance and build upon their strengths. We have used the GCPS Blueprint for the future to bridge the gap and to support students through the lens of empathy and using equity for all as we focus on effectiveness as a way of consistently achieving excellence in education.

#### **STEM Gems**

Our mission is to inform and expose our female students to careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and create a comfortable space for them to speak openly about their dreams and desires. Students meet weekly to engage in hands-on STEM projects and learn more about the essential role's females encompass in the world of STEM. These students are actively involved in projects that encourage the use of the STEM engineering design process and instill a courageous mindset that will foster and create females to pursue a career in the STEM Field.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

At Pharr Elementary School, family and community engagement is a priority. Our goal at Pharr is to make it a wonderful place to be where magical things happen daily through hard work, dedication, and a commitment to excellence. We started the school year with our inaugural Ice-Cream Social for students, teachers, families, and community members. This was a huge success that allowed for our school staff to bring their families to engage with our students and community members.

One of the most effective strategies we have found to be most successful in working with family and community members has been our Title I program. Through our Title I program; we host multiple parent workshops throughout the year. Parent workshops focused on building parent capacity to support students at home in the areas of English language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition in addition to other topics. During these parent workshops, our Parent Instructional Coordinator, Parent Outreach Liaison,

and various teacher leaders present academic content to parents through the form of live demonstrations, videos, and games to bring learning to life and provide strategies that are immediately applicable in the home environment.

In addition to our parent workshops, Pharr Elementary hosts various evening events for families. Literacy Night, Math Night, and STEM Night events are planned to strengthen the bridge between home and school through showcases of student work, student performances, games, multimedia activities. As students and parents rotate throughout the school to various grade level classrooms, teachers have planned activities that are age-appropriate for a cross-section of students.

One of our most successful schoolwide business partnerships was formed through our most recent Literacy Night. Pharr Elementary School partnered with Scholastic Books to provide three free books to each student. Scholastic Books provided the school with a variety of texts ranging from Pre-K level to middle school level on a variety of diverse topics. Through this partnership, students selected their books which they were able to add to their personal library at home. This partnership reinforced Pharr Elementary School's dedication to literacy for all students.

In addition, Pharr has partnered with 4-H to support our 5th grade students. A representative from Georgia 4-H, partners with Pharr's 5th grade students to enhance and enrich GCPS AKS by incorporating Georgia Standards through interactive science lessons and hands-on activities. This happens monthly for one hour covering the following lessons:

- Electricity and magnetism
- Physical and Chemical Changes
- Constructive and Destructive Forces
- Plant and Animal Classification
- Microorganisms
- Genetics/Inherited Traits (upcoming)
- Milestones Review Session (upcoming)

Each lesson entails a PowerPoint presentation, hands-on collaborative activities, and opportunities for students to lead. These lessons have a major impact on elevating students' understanding and working knowledge during classroom discourse.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

The vision for creating a learning environment where teachers feel valued and supported manifest through building positive supportive relationships from the principal and assistant principals. The principal's vision for building a positive rapport with the teaching staff is demonstrated daily as a top priority. This starts with a daily morning message posted outside the teacher's mailroom. The message is a greeting to the teaching staff with a positive message and provides important reminders or information. Every message provides the staff an opportunity to respond (i.e. please use the space below to congratulate the cafeteria staff on 100% with the Health Inspection; What is one word that describes Pharr?; Where is your favorite place to travel?; What are you doing for spring break?) This has become a staple for staff to read each morning before going to their classroom.

The administrative team enjoys celebrating the staff every opportunity possible. Through partnerships, we ensure that the staff has daily coffee, iced tea, and lemonade. At the end of each month, we have a Big-Breakfast for the staff to enjoy. We have birthday celebrations at our monthly staff meetings where we sing happy birthday to all staff with birthdays during that month. Each staff member gets a birthday certificate,

and their birthdates are posted in the bathrooms, teacher's lounge, and on the schoolwide daily slideshow. A popular recognition is the staff of the week for teacher, paraprofessional, and support staff. Each person gets to spin the wheel for a jeans pass, Wednesday jeans pass, lunch on administrators, grace leave, grade level donuts, or a snack and drink. They receive a staff of the week certificate. The administrators provide monthly popups for staff such as kickoff for college football with tailgate treats for staff in the conference room. In addition, teachers provide input for staff spirit ideas like Wacky Tacky outfit, Winter Holiday countdown, and Ugly Sweater Day.

The principal and assistant principals model the mindset to all staff members by letting them know that they will never forget what it is like to be a teacher in a classroom with thirty students. Whenever necessary, administrators roll up their sleeves and work alongside teachers to encourage and support them. Each day, the administrators work collaboratively to remove barriers from the teaching staff to ensure that they can focus on teaching and learning. The staff knows that it is the administrators' goal to champion them to be their best each day to experience academic success with students. The administrators have created systems for providing continuous feedback to staff. During observations staff is provided with bite size feedback on briefs and formatives to enhance their practice with action steps. Teachers also have the opportunity to engage in chat-n-chew with the principal to provide ideas, suggestions, and feedback for continuous quality improvement at Pharr. Teachers know that when they are successful everyone wins such as our students, teachers, and parents.

Administrators set teachers up to feel welcomed and a part of the team from day one. All teacher interviews are done as a grade level team. Teachers are empowered to decide who gets to join their grade level team when selecting a teacher candidate after the interviews. When a teacher is hired, that person immediately joins the grade level team via email or group chat to start collaboration. The new staff member is presented with a swag bag, introduced on the morning news show, and is recognized at the next staff meeting. The person is provided a mentor teacher for instruction and a staff mentor for check-ins, how to do, or general questions. This onboarding process continues for two to three years.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

The leadership philosophy at Pharr Elementary School is building purposeful relationships to impact student success. The three pillars that lead the principal and assistant principals' focus are positive culture, developing supportive collaborative teams, and continuous reflection and feedback with school performance and student data. The administrators believe that Pharr Elementary is about people and relationships that foster working collaboratively together to maintain and build upon systems and structures to empower the staff with skills to ensure that all students achieve their full academic and social development potential. The administrators promote a positive school culture that is centered on trust and respect. Administrators strive to develop supportive collaborative and highly functioning teams between students, classroom teachers, special education teachers, ESOL and gifted teachers, specialists (art, P.E., music, etc.), staff members, and parents.

One of the many ways the principal and assistant principals' leadership ensures the focus on improving student achievement is to start each day visiting classrooms to check in with students and teachers. This provides them with the opportunity to ensure that all students and the teaching staff know that they are visible, approachable, and accessible. The administrators recognize that teachers are the change agents of students' academic success. They set high expectations for teachers to provide high levels of student discourse to expand their thinking and learning during the delivery of instruction. In addition, the principal and assistant principals coach all teachers to create learning environments for all students that encourages social interaction, active engagement in learning, models enthusiasm for learning, demonstrates an understanding of learning expectations, and encourages confidence to explore and ask questions. As administrators frequently visit classrooms, they use these instructional research best practices to serve as a guide to provide teachers with timely and appropriate feedback to enhance teaching practices. These practices have become the culture of the school. Teachers and students look forward to administrators visiting classrooms.

These best practices have enhanced the continuous reflection and feedback to support leadership growth and

professional development. Teachers embrace feedback to get good at getting better and the instructional coach now leads the charge to develop instructional learning walks. A process for grade level teachers to visit other grade level classrooms during instructional lessons using the protocol “I See, I Notice, I Wonder.” After observing the lesson, the group of teachers have the opportunity for dialogue and discussion and provide peer teacher feedback. This process continues to have a positive impact on sharing teaching strategies across grade levels to reduce the variability with instruction at each grade level.

## **5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:**

The steps that are taken to ensure equity, culture awareness, and respect in the classroom and at school are done in a variety of ways. As a school community at Pharr, the principal took a gradual approach to create a learning community with ensuring educational equity for each student and staff member. It started with shifting the mindset of all staff members to lead with empathy daily. Regardless of what the situation is with students, we collectively press the reset button as often as we have to with the understanding that caring for kids and each other is non-negotiable. The principal and the assistant principals lead by example being intentional about getting to know each student by name and need, each staff member by name, and communicating and engaging with parents frequently and often (school events, community events, car riders’ line, etc.). The principal’s ongoing message to the staff is to build a strong relationship with students by making connections with them, engaging them so that they know they are seen, heard, and valued. Teachers create and design scaffold lessons with knowledge of cultural backgrounds to increase students’ opportunities to engage and interact with the new concepts or content to promote effective information processing. Teachers are provided with ongoing professional development to dialogue and discuss their understanding of social emotional learning to meet students where they are in order to take them where they need to be academically and socially emotionally. Using the program Character Strong, teachers have access to explicit lessons to address students’ social and emotional needs to build an equitable, respectful classroom environment. Teachers collaborate with each other to support students and use the resources to understand how to better respond to students with empathy.

Pharr addresses and celebrates student and staff backgrounds through the celebration of nationally recognized Heritage and History Months, including Hispanic Heritage Month, Native American Heritage Month, Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Arab American Heritage Month, and Asian American and Pacific Island Heritage Month. Each month, teachers have been provided a choice board of activities ranging from knowledge-building videos and books to read to interactive cultural activities to do with students. The celebration of these heritage and history months has expanded the school community’s knowledge of diversity and helped support a school environment that is respectful of diversity.

During Hispanic Heritage Month, one step taken to build cultural awareness was the creation of a celebratory video highlighting students and staff members of Hispanic origin. This video featured members of the school community speaking Spanish, sharing their favorite parts of their culture, and sharing their family histories. In order to engage the diverse family community, a Hispanic luncheon was hosted by parents for teachers which featured a cultural display of traditional food and music. During Black History Month, students create a Wax Museum to build cultural awareness of Black individuals who have positively impacted American history. Students share their research and personify during the Wax Museum.

Pharr annually hosts a Multicultural Night in which families were invited to create a display about their heritage country/culture for other families to learn. Staff, students, and families learned about the diverse school community in addition to global holidays including Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Diwali, and Ramadan. As an extension of these school wide celebrations, students in grades 3rd through 5th are provided the opportunity to participate in the Multicultural Club. The club exudes inclusivity generating positivity within the diverse cultural backgrounds that are a part of the school community for students and staff at Pharr. Now that Pharr has become more diverse, this club enables students to share where they come from and even bring the conversations home to talk with parents to learn about their heritage. At Pharr, the culture has become for our students to respect others, accept responsibility, model kindness, and strive for success. This extracurricular activity has become a vital part of promoting academic excellence by engaging in cultural lessons and promoting high expectations. Getting to know the students outside of the classroom has a tremendous impact with building positive trusting relationships with students. This club promotes the

social development of our students in various ways. By encouraging students to become engaged in the community, they learn about acceptance and respect of others' differences. They also get to socialize with other students and be more confident to share and make connections with others.

Pharr put a priority on becoming a more inclusive school. Through the Title I Family Engagement room, interpretation services are provided to support families whose primary language is not English. Teachers use interpreters during scheduled parent-teacher conferences, Student Support Team meetings, Individualized Education Program meetings, phone calls, etc. All schoolwide documents sent home with students are sent in both English and Spanish to ensure equitable access of information.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE**

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The practice that has been most instrumental to Pharr's success is consistently implementing a fully operationalized multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to identify and address all students' needs. We have laid the framework with staff, families, and students to make data-based decision making. (Tiered, SST, Wellbeing, and Behavioral Supports) We are building an infrastructure that includes a schedule to support multiple levels of interventions based on the needs of students. (PBIS, RTI, SST, and SMH) Pharr is monitoring progress along with making sure to monitor all levels of support. Finally, we are working towards building a stronger connection with families and community engagement under the framework of MTSS.

Each grade level has an intervention/enrichment segment known as RAMs Time. During RAMs time, students are grouped homogeneously by their needs. This allows an "all hands-on deck" approach for student support. Classroom and support teachers are making data-driven decisions to support students' academic, behavior, and social/emotional development. We have students who are working on foundational and prerequisite skills to aid them in demonstrating proficiency in previous/current grade level Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) standards. In other classrooms, students are working on thinking skills. During thinking skills gifted students focus on interdisciplinary enrichment activities, with a gifted certified teacher. Students are exposed to tasks that align with creativity, project-based learning, and stem.

In addition to providing academic support, during RAMs time, we also target students' behavior, social, and emotional needs. Our school counselors are working with the students' Educational Effectiveness Survey data to predict students who may experience connectedness or wellbeing needs, and/or behavioral concerns that impact learning. This data is used to form timely small groups to address specific student needs. We encourage teachers to consistently incorporate Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASELs) three signature SEL practices in the classroom so that students start feeling a sense of belonging and community.

When a staff member or stakeholder has concerns about a student progress, we use the response to intervention. RTI is a process within MTSS to observe and adjust interventions based upon student progress towards individual goals. process to help all students, including struggling learners. We work as a team to develop targeted interventions and supports that have a direct impact on the individual student. Teachers are utilizing systematic programs (Read 180, mClass Burst, Wilson Reading) to support learning.