Our Elementary School is an award-winning campus style public school located in a suburban town in Pennsylvania. The kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school serves approximately 1200 students with 24% receiving free or reduced lunch. Within the elementary building there are approximately 11 sections of each grade level with additional staff members serving as interventionists, specialists, and coaches. At the building level there is one principal for Kindergarten through fifth grade and three elementary assistant principals overseeing two grade levels each. The percentage of students that score proficient and advanced on the 2015 PSSA are 78.4 in English Language Arts, 64 in Mathematics and 86.3 in Science. In addition to state data, local benchmarks are used to progress monitor student performance and to drive instruction. Teachers meet in PLCs and IPMs to examine all assessments and behavioral indicators. Together these elements help to inform instructional decisions and intervention strategies for each student.

Our district is committed to building a flexible learning environment that promotes a culture of data informed instruction used to support the individual’s learning needs which ensures high expectations for all students. In May of 2015, we administered the BrightBytes survey. This data provided insight into the current integration of technology in teaching and learning and were found to be at an overall proficient level. The most notable area of need is found in classroom practices as it was at a basic level. Based on our district’s commitment to personalizing instruction; the elementary school has focused on the implementation of technology in the classroom and an instructional coaching model that focuses on using data to inform instruction. The current teaching and learning environment supports teacher leaders that have mastered instructional skills, guided math and reading instruction, and a strong instructional coaching model with four full time coaches. Our BrightBytes survey indicates that our community supports technology initiatives.

We administered the Brightbytes Survey in May of 2015 to parents, teachers and students in grades 3-5. Overall we scored 1048, which put us in the proficient range for overall technology use. While our overall scores were positive there is still room for improvement. The data indicated that both
our students and teachers enjoy exemplary access to devices at home. We realize that there is a growing population of students that don’t have access to devices at home and the survey results indicated that many of the devices available at home are shared with other siblings or parents. We fell in the basic area in the classroom use of the 4Cs and environment specifically with professional development. These are two important areas we expect to focus on with the execution of the planning grant.

**Academic Model:**

Our Elementary School Blended Learning philosophy is to improve authentic student learning and support the social/emotional development for the elementary level learner while facilitating personalized learning pathways and rigorous self-paced instruction in a Blended Learning environment. Our Elementary School Blended Learning philosophy will be based on the work of the Clayton Christensen Institute for Disruptive Innovation and subscribes to the following understandings. Blended learning focuses on the development of instructional strategies that are data driven and incorporate technology as a tool for engaging students in new levels of learning. By examining how to include strong components of student directed and personalized learning into each student’s, program our staff will discover new instructional strategies, new building structures, and identify professional learning needs. As a result of these discoveries, our Elementary school will seek to implement a blended model that is best suited to the needs of our learners and high expectations for all. Through our participation in this grant, we will explore the various blended learning models; including flex, station rotation, and lab then choose the model that best fits our students’ instructional needs.

This model represents a dramatic change in the role of the teacher, giving students more ownership over their own learning. Technology tools, software and data will provide teachers new and real-time access to information on student progress that will be utilized to group students and inform instructional goals. Using this information, we may utilize a station rotation structure including, but not limited to direct instruction, independent instruction and personalized/collaborative projects. In order to deliver a blended and personalized instructional model, the physical environment of the classroom will need to be
reimagined to support flexible grouping, areas for technology, small group work locations and areas for direct instruction.

The building wide environment is shaped by our professional learning model, which emphasizes the use of instructional coaching, and PLC models (professional learning communities). Elementary schedules have been modified to support the PLC and coaching models to allow for specific times for teachers and coaches to collaborate. There are four full-time instructional coaches dedicated to the K-5 elementary teachers focusing on literacy, math and technology. Data are used to group, instruct and review regularly at all grade levels to provide a learning profile that meets students’ instructional needs. Intervention is differentiated to meet student needs and follows MTSS (multi-tiered system of support) model. This structure allows a great deal of flexibility with grouping our students that will be very conducive to a quality blended learning environment. This model is supported by an instructional coaching program that relies on data to inform decision making about instructional practices to personalize learning.

Technology is one-fourth of our Comprehensive and Strategic Plan; therefore we have established and maintained a strong commitment to cultivating a district-wide 21st Century learning environment. We have spent the last four years focusing on a vision that utilizes the HEAT and SAMR frameworks as a focus for professional development and instructional planning. Our teachers possess the professional knowledge, experience and foundational skills necessary for building an effective blended learning environment.

Readiness:

Our school has demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement that includes the development of a school culture that supports innovation to improve student achievement. Our Elementary School has structures in place that fully demonstrate our readiness for implementing blended learning to our staff and students. Through the use of professional learning time in our district our teachers are able to effectively implement professional learning community strategies to develop new ideas and collaborate on instructional challenges. This grant would allow for an expansion and/or
refinement of what we can offer to all students in the building. Differentiated instruction in reading based on the WIN (What I need) model is in place, which differentiates, based on students’ needs, and provides targeted instruction on an individual level. Based on our reflection of the WIN model, we see an opportunity through this grant to integrate technology tools to further support differentiated pathways to individual student learning. The guided model is currently being implemented in some classrooms with a plan for full guided math instruction in the next two years. This grant would provide resources to expand the learning environment to a blended station rotation model of learning for all students.

Teachers, administrators and instructional coaches are active participants in data teams that conduct Intervention Planning Meetings (IPMs) on a regular schedule for the sole purpose of looking at and interpreting student data. The goal of this teacher led group is to support classroom instruction by participating in co-teaching, instructional coaching, student grouping and team planning. Student groups are fluid and monitored regularly. These groups change as a result of student needs based on assessment data, teacher input, and individual needs. Due to this level of staffing we have a strong team that provides just-in-time, job embedded professional development, technology support, academic support and instructional coaching across the building. The active participation of staff members and administrators in these planning meetings shows a willingness to support students in a personalized learning environment that meets their instructional needs.

The wireless LAN at the Elementary School consists of 75 radios capable of the 802.11ac standard. The radios are installed in a triangulated pattern to offer coverage for both range and density. All radios connect to modern gigabit switching equipment. Access to our wireless LAN has been simplified to enhance the educational process and provide access in all classrooms. Our classrooms are equipped with adequate technology resources including but not limited to interactive whiteboards, computer labs, desktop computers, and various mobile devices. Some classrooms in the upper elementary allow opportunities for BYOT participation (bring your own technology). In addition, we have the staffing to fully support the technology within the building, including two directors and dedicated building level technicians.
Collaboration:

As a district we place a high value on professional collaboration and sharing within our district and with other districts. We have established a strong model for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in our school. Teachers meet regularly during the six-day cycle to engage in job embedded learning, data review, planning and collaboration. We have established collaborative partnerships with neighboring districts and routinely share professional development opportunities. Our parents, school board, and other constituents support initiatives in the building and are regularly involved in opportunities to collaborate with the school.

Each year we provide a district wide conference day that brings the experience of attending a national conference to all of our teachers. On this conference day we offer professional learning opportunities that introduce our teachers to a variety of topics for learning including how to implement blended learning strategies into classroom practice. Our conference day starts with a nationally known keynote speaker and continues with poster sessions, playground experiences, student exhibits and breakout sessions run both by our teachers and outside speakers. The conference seeks to utilize technology such as our Canvas Learning Management System as well as blended instructional practices that model strategies for implementing a blended model. In the past we have invited neighboring districts to partner and participate in our conference day as attendees or participants and plan to continue that practice so that we can share our learning and benefit from the expertise of other districts. As a district, we routinely present at conferences on the national, state and regional level at training opportunities and would continue to welcome those opportunities.

We will use technology as one mechanism to share our work with others. We will create a public website and invite others to follow our work and findings. Social media, such as Twitter, Facebook or Google+ will be used to share information using a hashtag or a twitter chat. A hashtag will allow others to follow our work during the pilot and allow for the creation of a professional learning network (PLN) with other regional districts.
The Capital Area Intermediate Unit has structures in place that will help facilitate sharing. The regional council advisory meetings (TAC, SAC, CAC) and the statewide PAIU.net will be utilized for sharing through monthly updates. We will invite representatives from CAIU and other districts for on-site training and visitations. We will continue to present at conferences and have existing experience and expertise presenting at those venues.

Other:

Our vision states “As parents, staff and community, we will cultivate an extraordinary learning environment that expands the minds and nurtures success for every member of the school community.” We believe this partnership of all members of the school community will provide the needed support and momentum for our planning efforts. A shared commitment to the blended-learning model is demonstrated through all levels of our district leadership starting with our Board of School Directors. In-service days, conference planning and professional learning will focus around the planning and implementation of this model into the learning environment in our building.
Section VI - Core Planning Team
Members of the school community strive to promote, enhance, and sustain a shared vision of positive school climate. Professional development focuses on effective instructional practices to engage students in 21st century skills, reflective teaching practices using the HEAT framework, and expanded use of teachers as Instructional Leaders. The building leadership at the Elementary School support, inspire and motivate innovation and risk-taking with their teachers.

Elementary School Blended Learning Core Planning Team
- Instructional Coach A: Instructional Coach for Literacy,
  ○ Association Member
- Instructional Coach B: Instructional Coach for Math,
  ○ Association Member
- Instructional Coach C: Instructional Coach for Technology,
  ○ Association Member - Former teacher with 8 years experience
- Teacher A: Special Education Consultant,
  ○ Association Member, 16 years teaching experience, master's degree in special education, autism certificate, BS in psychology
- Teacher B: 3rd Grade Teacher
  ○ Association Member, 10 years of experience in education. Teaching certifications in elementary education, ESL certification and has begun continuing her education in an instructional technology specialist program.
- Teacher C: 4th Grade Teacher
  ○ Association Member, 13 years teaching experience, master's degree in Science
- Teacher D: 5th Grade Teacher
  ○ Association Member, Grade level coordinator, 11 years teaching experience, certifications in elementary education and reading specialist, master's degree in literacy and additional credits in educational technology
- School Board Member
  ○ President of school board
- Parent
  ○ PTO President; child currently in third grade
- Administrator A: K-5 Elementary Principal
  ○ 26 years experience in regular ed/special education, former instructional coach, administrator for 9 years
- Administrator B: Elementary School Assistant Principal -
  ○ Former general education and special education teacher with 12 years experience in education, administrator for 2 years
- Administrator C: Elementary School Assistant Principal -
  ○ Former teacher and instructional coach with 14 years experience in education, administrator for 2 years
- Administrator D: Assistant Middle School & Online Learning Principal
- Former teacher and high school assistant principal
- Director of Instructional Technology
  - Former teacher and instructional coach with 23 years experience in education
- Assistant to the Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
  - Former teacher and middle school principal
- Superintendent of Schools
  - Former teacher, elementary principal and director of curriculum

**Spending Plan Summary**

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