



**2018 Application**  
**Performance Area:**  
**Teaching, Learning & Assessment**

**Please complete all sections of this application form, save the file and email to [Training@msbanet.org](mailto:Training@msbanet.org) by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 9, 2018.**

School District: Montgomery County R-II School District

Board President: John Shaw President Daytime Phone: 636-288-3057

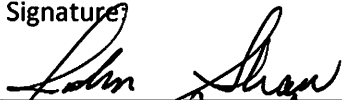
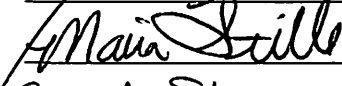
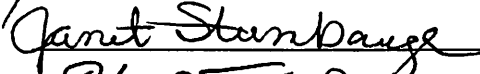
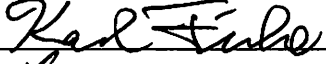

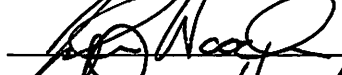

President Email: Shaw.john.t@gmail.com

**Names of and Titles Who Contributed to the Application:**

**Board Members:** John Shaw, Maria Stille, Janet Stumbaugh, Karl Finke, Karl Queathem, John Woods, and Gina Hartman

**Assistant Superintendent:** Della Bell-Freeman

We attest that this application has been completed and reviewed by the board members listed above and made with the knowledge and approval of at least a quorum of the board. We attest that the information provided in this application is true and accurate. **Signatures Required.**

Print Name:	Signature:
<u>John Shaw</u>	<u></u>
<u>Maria Stille</u>	<u></u>
<u>Janet Stumbaugh</u>	<u></u>
<u>Karl Finke</u>	<u></u>
<u>Karl Queathem</u>	<u></u>
<u>John Woods</u>	<u></u>
<u>Gina Hartman</u>	<u></u>

If selected as a winner, the Board of Education agrees to share their outstanding accomplishments through MSBA communication channels, including but not limited to publications, media outlets and/or presentations at meetings and conferences, on mutual agreement of the district and MSBA.

Yes  No

**Teaching, Learning & Assessment Criteria**

- 1. Current Comprehensive Curricula:** A current, comprehensive curricula is externally aligned with Missouri standards approved by the State Board of Education and internally aligned within and across grade levels and all subject areas. Current board policies support a systematic review, evaluation and revision of curricula that includes input from all stakeholder groups. All curricula are formally approved by the board. The board approved curricula are accessible to professional staff and communicated to parents/guardians. There is evidence of implementation of board approved curricula in all classrooms.
- 2. Strong Instructional Leadership and Effective Instruction:** Instructional leadership and instructional practices are based on evidence from a body of high quality research and demonstrate high

expectations for all students. The board periodically reviews instructional leadership and instruction for effectiveness and impact on student performance. The board supports plans that proactively seek improved instructional leadership and effective instruction. There is evidence that improvement in instructional leadership and instruction has led to increased student performance.

3. **Data-based Decision Making Regarding Instruction and Programming:** Instructional programs and practices demonstrate alignment to the district's priorities outlined in the strategic plan/CSIP. Systematic collection and review of applicable and reliable data guides decisions regarding the effectiveness of instructional programs and practices. The board periodically reviews district programs and practices for effectiveness in achieving district priorities. The board supports plans that proactively seek proven, research-based instructional programs and practices. There is evidence of improvement in the district's instructional programs and practices.
4. **Balanced and Comprehensive System of Student Assessment:** An effective comprehensive assessment system (e.g. formative, benchmark and summative assessments) measure progress toward mastery of curricular standards. Ongoing formative and benchmark assessments guide instructional practice, including individual remedial and enrichment requirements. Student performance data is communicated in ways that are clear and meaningful for all stakeholders. The board periodically reviews the effectiveness of the student assessment system and clarity of the communication of student performance data. The board supports plans that proactively seek improved assessment practices to improve instruction and student performance. Assessment practices have led to improvement in instruction and student performance.
5. **Access to Educational Programming and Resources:** All student populations are provided access to educational programming and resources determined by their needs. There is a focus on closing achievement gaps by using data to improve practices and provide targeted programs or supports. The board periodically reviews the access to and effectiveness of educational programming and resources for all students according to their instructional needs and supports plans that proactively seek improved access and effectiveness of educational programming. There is evidence of the effectiveness of the educational programming and resources in improving student performance and closing achievement gaps.

6.

#### **Application Questions**

Provide the Board of Education's response to the following questions for each of the criteria areas listed above. Responses may not exceed one page for each of the criteria areas. Additional pages, including appendices or attachments, will not be read or considered.

1. Describe what occurred that is outstanding in the criteria area. Be sure to address all areas listed in the description of the criteria.
2. Fully describe how specific board practices achieved or contributed to the outstanding accomplishment for the criteria area. Fully describe the board's role and/or actions that led to the accomplishment.
3. How do you know it worked? Describe the evidence that demonstrates the board's practices are effective in meeting the criteria area.

#### **Application Process**

On the last page of the application, describe the process the board used to complete the application so as to ensure participation of board members in the application process. Include information on the board's process for deciding to apply for the award; how board members contributed ideas for the content of the application; board member involvement in the drafting of the application; and board approval of the final application to be submitted to MSBA. The response is limited to one page.

**Questions about the Application or Awards**

Please contact Janet Tilley, Director, Board Development, by phone at 800-221-MSBA (6722), ext 379, or by email at [tilley@msbanet.org](mailto:tilley@msbanet.org).

## **1. Current Comprehensive Curriculum:**

A foundational goal of the Montgomery County R-II School District is to provide a high-quality education designed to lead our students to personal success. The foundation for achieving this goal is implementing and using a curriculum that meets all applicable standards and which is designed to lead to learning and student success. Our board supports the involvement of staff in DESE curriculum work to ensure that our district is current on all curricular and assessment changes and is progressive in addressing the Missouri Learning Standards.

Specifically, our board receives monthly updates on work being done to support student achievement, which necessarily includes curriculum information. We also request an annual curriculum report to get a broader, overall, view of our district's curriculum. We review course offerings regularly to ensure we are providing the most comprehensive curriculum possible given our resources. Some specific examples of recent curriculum changes include expanding into online classes, including district-developed courses and partnering with outside sources to provide additional online offerings. After a recent review of our high school social studies curriculum, we revised this department's structure to allow three new social studies courses to be developed and added to our class offerings.

As our district has moved to a 1:1 student to technology ratio, the board supports the use of the SAMR model to infuse technology into teaching and learning to ensure teachers strive to reach modification and redefinition in their lessons while implementing the district-adopted curriculum. We provide the staffing of instructional coaches at the elementary schools and tech coaches in the secondary district buildings to ensure teachers have internal resources and support to improve teaching while implementing the curriculum in the classroom with fidelity.

The Montgomery County R-II board has adopted CSIP strategies to address curriculum and instruction, including ensuring local curriculum is aligned to the Missouri learning standards, utilizing a centralized location to store district curriculum maps with universal components, using collaborative efforts to improve teaching and ensuring curriculum is consistent vertically and horizontally, and regular monitoring of student data and teacher evaluation data to ensure that the curriculum is effective. Our district uses locally adopted assessment tools (Mastery Connect, FASTBridge, benchmark testing, USA Test Prep, CDT, MAP assessments, Istudent e-learning, end of course exams, TSA, and other formative assessments) to inform instruction. We have implemented a number of communication tools, including Mastery Connect, SIS Parent portals, weekly, monthly, and quarterly reports to parents to ensure parents understand the curriculum and how their individual student is progressing.

In addition to generally supporting the district efforts described above, the board supports our curriculum efforts by ensuring the budget provides for sufficient professional development. The board conducts an annual day-long curriculum tour of our district buildings where board members spend a day observing the teaching and implementation of our curriculum in the classroom. Board members are assigned to the CSIP team and are responsible for developing and adopting the CSIP, including specific strategies to ensure district and student success.

The data our district has collected indicates that our focus on curriculum and instruction has been effective. On a macro level, our district scored over 96% on our most recent APR report. The board reviews assessment and achievement data on a monthly basis and regularly sees improvements in student achievement district-wide. Our monthly district Professional Development Report also indicates our curriculum and instruction efforts are succeeding. Staff are surveyed monthly on our professional development, and staff survey results indicate that the professional development is relevant, assists teachers in better serving students, and leads to teacher understanding and improvement of teaching skills.

## **2. Strong Instructional Leadership and Effective Instruction:**

A high-quality curriculum is only as strong as the administrators and teachers implementing it. A goal of the Montgomery County R-II School District is to try to attract and retain the best-quality teachers and administrators, then help them continually improve, and identify any weaknesses in our teaching that may need correction and try to turn previous instructional weaknesses into strengths. Our two primary instructional improvement tools are continuous professional development and our teacher evaluation and improvement program.

Our school district utilizes a four-day instructional week. When the board decided to move to a four-day school week, the primary motivating factors related to student achievement and included reducing student absences, substitute teacher days, and improving staff professional development. With Mondays as a non-attendance day, staff and students use this day to schedule appointments that would otherwise take them out of school during a regular class day. Student attendance improved, and substitute teacher days dropped. We now have highly qualified teachers instead of substitute teachers instructing classes on a much more regular basis.

The four-day school week also allowed us to make significant improvements to our professional development program. Instead of short one-to-two hour long professional development opportunities, we now schedule day-long, in depth, comprehensive professional development activities at least one Monday each month. This allows time for instruction as well as discussion among the staff so that our professional development is more likely to be more-refined when implemented in the classroom.

Our district's staff evaluation system is one of the most-important programs in our school district. We have implemented the Network for Educator Effectiveness (NEE) evaluation tools at all levels in our district. The NEE program that we utilize in our district is highly data driven and involves regular observation and evaluation of each classroom teacher, their lesson plans, and units of instruction. It also includes regular student surveys and peer observations. The data gathered from each of these sources is compiled and incorporated to develop individual professional growth plans for each teacher. The objective is to achieve continuous teacher improvement documented by observable data. As the effectiveness of this system became apparent, our district adopted the NEE principal evaluation system. This past year the board piloted the NEE superintendent evaluation system so that our evaluation systems are consistent from the newest first-year teachers to our superintendent.

Our board reviews NEE data on a monthly basis at each school board meeting. We identify strengths, weaknesses, trends, and data distribution to identify where resources need to be allocated to improve student achievement. Principals maintain data dashboards with student achievement data for board review. This data is also reviewed monthly. The board also conducts a day-long curriculum tour where actual classroom instruction is observed by the board in each district building. This is a great opportunity for the board to witness the learning that takes place in our classrooms. Each month the board receives a report from the assistant superintendent relating to the most-recent data on testing and other data collected during the last month. This data is used to inform board decisions on budgeting and programs.

Through regular professional development and a comprehensive, data-driven evaluation system, we have seen significant improvements within our district. We track 23 core subjects and instruction areas and compare our student performance to the state average. Over the past 9 years, our district has improved in 22 of these 23 areas when compared to the state average. Our focus on improving effective instruction has led to near-universal improvement in student achievement.

### **3. Data-based Decision Making Regarding Instruction and Programming:**

The Montgomery County R-II School District attempts to collect, analyze, and utilize data when making all relevant instructional and programming decisions. This includes front-line classroom teachers collecting and evaluating data on their own students' performance, building principals collecting and utilizing data to evaluate and help classroom teachers improve, and the board utilizing data on a macro, district-wide scale to inform policy decisions, budget allocations, and employment decisions.

Each individual classroom teacher is expected to collect and assess data on student performance to understand which students are struggling or achieving, where the teacher may need to reinforce, repeat or strengthen teaching, and which students may need additional supplementary instruction or which students are ready for additional enrichment activities. This data collection and evaluation process is continual, ongoing, and occurs on a daily basis. In order to accomplish this, our district utilizes a wide range of data collection and analysis programs to ensure we are collecting and utilizing actual data rather than subjective opinions when making instructional decisions. Many of the specific data collection and analysis tools are identified in the fourth paragraph of Section 1 above.

In addition to individual teachers using their own data, this data is reviewed and discussed in horizontal and vertical team environments. Grade level or same-subject teachers review and compare their data with other teachers to try to identify if statistically significant variation is present between classrooms or teachers. Where variation occurs, instruction methods and materials are evaluated and modified to strengthen lower-performing teacher and students. Students and groups of students are tracked vertically to ensure proper progression year by year. Principals and administrators review classroom, teacher, grade and building level data, then work with individual teachers or departments to identify causes of low performance and implement strategic changes to improve student learning. The NEE evaluation process used district-wide is entirely driven by data observations and is used to identify professional development needs of teachers on an individual basis.

On a more-global, district level, the board reviews grade level, building level, and district-wide data on an ongoing basis. As part of the monthly board materials, each principal provides a data report to the board on student achievement for the previous month. Each board meeting includes an Achievement Report from the assistant superintendent that summarizes data collected during the previous month and conclusions that can be drawn from the data along with recommendations for changes or improvements based on the data. This allows the board to understand both the strengths and weaknesses of the district and its component parts and ensure that decisions are informed and backed by relevant data.

A recent example of using data to make decisions on instruction and programming involves our school district's high school ACT scores. While our APR, MAP and EOC scores have been trending in a positive direction over recent years, district ACT scores have been stagnant and below our expectation. The board approved a plan to embed ACT concepts in core high school classes, with the hope of seeing higher ACT scores. A follow-up review of the district data indicated that this approach did not result in significantly improved scores, so in the fall of 2017 the board directed the high school principal to implement a specific ACT preparatory class for high school juniors and seniors. The board allocated funds to add this new program. While complete data will not be available until after the April ACT test, preliminary results of the December and February test show that students who participated showed significant improvement, typically between 2 to 4 points.

We know that our data-intensive approach to instruction and programs is working because the data shows systematic, district-wide improvement in student achievement. As noted in Part 2 above, our district has systematically improved in 22 of the 23 core academic areas that we track. The data also shows that teacher performance has significantly improved. The number of teachers within the district identified as needing improvement plans or designated for non-renewal has dropped by over 50% as we have used our data collection to identify their individual weaknesses and coached them on improvement strategies to help them become more effective teachers.

#### **4. Balanced and Comprehensive System of Student Assessment:**

Assessment of student learning and performance is a daily, regular, and routine part of most schools' operations. This is especially true in the Montgomery County R-II School district. Our objective is to measure our staff's success and our students' success in as many ways as possible, to analyze the data, and to try to develop strategies based on that data review to improve. Our CSIP requires that individual building administration assess and measure and then report to the board, comprehensive information on academic data for core subject areas each semester (or more often if appropriate), along with attendance data and office referral/student discipline data. The board uses this data to identify district weaknesses and strengths. The board bases resource allocations and budget decisions on data results with the goal to provide programs and instruction designed to address and improve areas of weakness.

This past year we tried to take that approach one step further and attempt to better identify students who are "at risk" before they ever fall behind or fail in instructional areas. By taking this enhanced approach, we hope to be able to focus more on early intervention rather than later remediation. Once a student has failed to learn or master a concept, that student falls behind and is unable to meaningfully build on those concepts. Over the passage of time, it becomes increasingly difficult to use remediation to help that student catch up to his or her peers. Early intervention allows students to stay on track and understand concepts as they are taught in the classroom. Early intervention is more effective than later remediation and allows students to continually build on more and more difficult concepts as they are taught throughout their school career.

One of the new tools the Montgomery County R-II School District is using this year to help with early intervention is the FastBridge SAEBRS assessment. This assessment tool is completed by classroom teachers to identify not only academic risk factors, but also emotional and social risk factors that might impact student learning. This screening is completed three times per year, and individual reports are provided to parents for their individual students.

The board reviews building and grade level pooled reports after each assessment to understand trends within the district so that board actions and policies can be enacted to support early intervention strategies. Board members are actively involved in our CSIP development, and policies to strengthen assessment are embedded in the CSIP. The board supports use of a wide variety of assessment tools and packages and provides funding for each of them. The board reviews district assessment data on a regular, monthly basis, and compares results from different assessment tools. The board also set an annual goal for our superintendent for the current school year to improve district communication with parents, so that we are continuously building better paths to communicate all of this data to parents. The board receives and reviews regular reports at board meetings on individual teachers who are underperforming or struggling in areas and discusses solutions with administration.

This early assessment of at-risk factors combined with existing assessment tools (MAP, EOC, ACT, Mastery Connect, NEE, etc) allows the district to identify students in need of intervention and teachers in need of improvement in a more timely and accurate manner. We are able to better group students, use differentiated instruction, and use instructional strategies within individual student's zone of developmental needs. As our district implements more effective assessment strategies, our students' assessment data shows that student learning and achievement is improving. This is true of both daily, internal, assessment numbers as well as in district summative assessments such as end-of-course exams and MAP test results.

Although our FAST (at risk) screening program has only been in place for less than a year, data shows that fewer students were identified and classified as "at risk" as we implemented our intervention strategies and performed a second, follow-up, risk screening. As a school district, overall we are seeing a high level of success, with last year's district-wide APR score jumping to 96.1%. Our efforts to communicate assessment results also show marked improvement. Traffic on district social media accounts where success stories are regularly shared is steeply up. As teachers use broader assessment data, teachers tend to be more effective. The data provides a clear path to help students succeed and helps teachers themselves improve. As discussed in part 3 above, this has led to a 50%+ decrease in the number of teachers needing improvement plans or non-renewal action.

## **5. Access to Educational Programming and Resources:**

The Montgomery County R-II School District has used a rigorous Professional Learning Community (PLC) model for the past decade with the shared goal of closing any existing achievement gap and helping every student succeed. Our goal is to identify individual student learning needs early and provide specific, targeted, intervention at the individual student level. This is a priority in our district and is embedded throughout our CSIP.

Recent efforts have been made to strengthen our Response to Intervention (RTI) process and develop consistent practices across all grade levels from elementary through high school. A district RTI team was established and is comprised of building RTI leaders who are responsible for helping lead RTI efforts in individual buildings. The district RTI team meets on professional development days to refine their practices and procedures.

As noted in Section 4 above, one of the focuses of our district this year is to enhance our early identification of at-risk students so that we can provide additional support, differentiated instruction, and targeted intervention before any achievement gap forms. The results of this universal at-risk screening tool is reported and utilized by the building and district RTI teams to make their efforts more effective. In addition, a systematic, district-wide process was put in place to track student referrals to the RTI team and measure progress.

Students district-wide are identified for flexible grouping based current learning levels and needs. Our assessment tools allow teachers to see individual skill reports on a student-by-student basis. The skill reports identify skills mastered and skills in development along with the level of development. Individual student need is specifically identified, allowing our RTI teams to focus on the specific needs of each student.

This past year our district sought to strengthen our RTI program even more at the elementary level. The board provided funding to add the Istation e-learning program, which is a comprehensive online learning and assessment tool available to students at school and at home. This program identifies “indicators of progress” and measures student growth using engaging computer-adaptive diagnostic and screening programs designed to meet the needs of all levels of learners. The home component is available to students and parents to continue learning and remediation efforts outside the classroom.

In addition to efforts with a strong academic focus, the Montgomery County R-II School District works to provide supplemental extracurricular and co-curricular activities that support desired learning. A recent example was the establishment of academic extracurricular coaching positions at each elementary and middle school building. The job description of these positions includes identifying and developing after-school elective programs where students can build on classroom learning and participate in competitive and noncompetitive enrichment type activities.

One of the strongest focus areas of the MCR2 board is student achievement. Board members are part of the district CSIP team and help develop the district’s global policies and practices. The board receives and reviews achievement data on a monthly basis and discusses and tries to use this data to identify district strengths and weaknesses at each board meeting. The board requires accountability from district administrators and action steps to address areas of need. The board supports advanced analysis tools used throughout our district by funding a wide variety of software and other programs used in the RTI program. The board regularly provides additional funding for tools such as the Istation e-learning system and the FAST screening tool. The addition of elementary and middle school academic extracurricular coaches was a program initiated by the school board.

The efforts of the MCR2 school district to provide appropriate, targeted, and specific educational programming to each student has had specific and measurable success. Our middle school has been classified as an “Exemplary” PLC school for three years. Our other schools are approaching this goal. Overall our district APR has shown significant improvement from 87.5% in 2013 to 96.1% in 2017. APR subgroup achievement has improved from 71.4% in 2013 to 89.3% in 2017. Use of our FAST universal screener for less than a year shows a reduced number of at-risk students when comparing beginning of year and middle of year data. The use of the Istation program shows similar results. Pooled student reading results for a typical elementary class showed 61% of students testing in Tier 1 (on target) at the beginning of the school year. February testing shows 82% of students in Tier 1. One of the district’s elementary buildings used the Istation to test math competency. Early in the school year 49% of students were classified in the highest tier (Tier 1). In follow-up testing in February, 66% of students building-wide scored in Tier 1.



**Application Process:** describe the process the board used to complete the application so as to ensure participation of board members in the application process. Include information on the board's process for deciding to apply for the award; how board members contributed ideas for the content of the application; board member involvement in the drafting of the application; and board approval of the final application to be submitted to MSBA.

The preparation of this application involved collaboration between board members and administration through all steps of the process. The initial discussions about the application took place during a board meeting. After meeting and discussing the application process, an online shared document was created with board members and administrators having access to the document to outline ideas for each area of the application. Once a body of ideas, facts, and data was compiled for each application area, a second online shared document was created to draft the content of the application itself. Drafting was completed by the board with some input from administration. After the application was prepared, the final application was reviewed and approved at our March board meeting.