

U.S. Department of Education
2016 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Ms. Kelli O'Neil

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

Official School Name Soaring Eagles Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 4710 Harrier Ridge Drive

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

City Colorado Springs State CO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 80916-5745

County El Paso

Telephone (719) 540-4000 Fax (719) 540-4020

Web site/URL http://soaringeagles.hsd2.org/pages/SoaringEaglesES E-mail koneil@hsd2.org

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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. Andre Spencer E-mail aspencer@hsd2.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Harrison School District 2 Tel. (719) 538-4880

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Eileen Gonzalez
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The public school has met their state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) using the most recent accountability results available for the year prior to nomination.
3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's accountability requirements (i.e., avoided sanctions) in participation, performance in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics, and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate) for the year in which they are nominated (2015-2016) and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2010 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, or 2015.
7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.
8. The nominated school 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. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2015-2016) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 - Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2015 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	47	45	92
1	37	46	83
2	63	53	116
3	51	40	91
4	50	37	87
5	41	46	87
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	289	267	556

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 14 % Black or African American
 - 44 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 1 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 29 % White
 - 10 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2014 – 2015 school year: 13%

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

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	29
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	41
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	70
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	549
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.128
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	13

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 15 %
84 Total number ELL

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

Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 60 %
Total number students who qualify: 334
8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %
34 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 13
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers	25
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals	8
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22:1

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

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	96%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2015.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2009

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

Our mission is to educate all students through high expectations and rigorous instruction in a safe and caring environment, allowing students to SOAR to success.

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

Soaring Eagles Elementary is a small Gifted and Talented magnet school within a regular/typical school. Of the 556 students enrolled, only 41 of them are out of the district's boundaries. The CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) is used to determine areas of giftedness for those children who present themselves as GT. Otherwise, our school adheres to an open enrollment policy.

PART III – SUMMARY

Welcome to Soaring Eagles Elementary located in the southeast side of Colorado Springs and home to 532 of the brightest gems of our future! Open since August 2003 and a proud Blue Ribbon recipient in 2009 and Colorado Title I Distinguished School for Exceptional Student Performance in 2011, we continue to serve students from kindergarten through fifth grade in both the Title I mainstream and gifted and talented classrooms. Since receiving the Blue Ribbon award, our school has partnered with struggling schools within our district to offer coaching and feedback on planning and instruction. We often host school districts across the state for observation and discussion of best practices. Perhaps most important, the recognition has motivated Soaring Eagles staff to continue our reputation of excellence.

We maintain our high expectations and quality instruction in a safe and caring environment even though our school dynamics have changed since receiving the honor. Our free and reduced lunch students have increased from forty-nine to sixty-two percent. Our minority population has multiplied from sixty to seventy-seven percent. And perhaps most impressive, the number of students receiving English Language Development services has increased from seven percent to a staggering forty-seven percent!

We work to provide a strong and positive environment for both students and staff. Following the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) model, we have created SOAR (Safety, Organization, Attitude and Respect), a set of school wide rules for the classroom and all common areas. The rules are taught and reinforced throughout the year and students are recognized monthly for outstanding SOAR behavior. A PBS committee meets regularly to create incentives and discuss behavior issues.

Academic progress and student behavior are discussed by a team of teachers and support staff every Monday in Professional Learning Committees (PLC). This designated time is used to discuss and evaluate interventions to determine next steps, as well as focus on students that are targeted for the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. We also establish next steps for achieving mastery of Colorado and Common Core standards based on an analysis of data from grade-level tests, district assessments, and National assessments.

Our staff has taken the initiative to define and structure the RTI process. Each grade level has developed a data notebook used to track all students, whether they are at risk, on track, or excelling, to ensure no student is left behind. Teachers use progress monitoring tools regularly to track achievement and growth. Classroom teachers and support personnel who have been trained in specific skill-based programs collaborate to develop and administer interventions for underachieving students. During our monthly data meetings, the grade level team, paraprofessionals assigned to that grade, the special education teacher, school counselor, and assistant principal gather to evaluate data and determine interventions and resources for students that are not making sufficient academic or behavioral progress.

As part of our Title I services, we put on two themed Literacy Nights each year to provide parents with strategies to incorporate literacy at home. Families are a vital part of our school setting and every year, the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) organizes and recruits parents for many special fundraiser events, including the Color Run and Skate City Family Nights. PTO also purchases prizes to motivate students to achieve their Accelerated Reader goals. Throughout the year, parents are also invited to events such as award assemblies, field day, band concerts, art shows, and talent shows. In addition, students are given leadership opportunities through our student council, which actively raises money through various spirit days and a monthly college shirt day where students contribute money to wear a college shirt to school. These funds directly benefit the Soaring Eagles Scholarship Fund, which has already awarded three former Soaring Eagles students each with a \$500 college scholarship.

We take pride in our commitment to incorporating technology in the classroom. Thanks to fundraising, grant writing, and our administration's commitment to enhancing instruction via technology, classroom teachers are provided with an iPad and all 26 classrooms are equipped with Smart Boards and document cameras. In grades 3-5, a classroom set of laptops is available for student use. Students attend technology class on a weekly basis to address the growing demand for the ability to manipulate a computer. At least four times a

week, all classes participate in DreamBox, a computer program that identifies a student's math skill level and tailors each child's experience to increase learning opportunities.

Our staff truly believes in Soaring Eagle's vision: Our children come to us with the potential for greatness; our school will lay the foundation and provide tools for their success. With a staff of dedicated teachers, expert paraprofessionals, supportive administrators, and involved parents and community, Soaring Eagles' students have the potential to develop their full academic, emotional, physical, social, and cultural potential.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

In English Language Arts, we follow our district-designed curriculum maps that are aligned to both Colorado Academic and Common Core State Standards. The maps are supplemented with research based materials, resources from the American Reading Company, and an interdisciplinary approach to instruction, rather than following one prescribed program. This integration-based curricular approach works in our building to meet the needs of both high-achieving and struggling students. Foundational skills are acquired through core programs that begin with an isolated skill and follow, a progression of learning such as Saxon Phonics, Treasures (McMillan McGraw Hill - MMH), and Write Tools. Online resources such as readinga-z.com and ReadWorks.org are used as supplemental material in all grades. For students that are performing below grade level, we first identify a deficit, then match the student with a resource that focuses directly on this need. Programs such as LIPS, Visualization and Verbalization, Seeing Stars (Lindamood-Bell), Triumphs (MMH), Read Naturally, Lyrics to Learn, and Barton address specific areas where growth is needed. In order to simultaneously meet the needs of our above grade level students, we align and complement core programs for their accelerated trajectory of growth.

The district-purchased core curriculum available in our school for math is Envision Math (Pearson). This year our school supplemented Envision by adopting Engage New York. Utilizing Engage New York has helped support the transition to Common Core standards. To acquire foundational skills, direct instruction, collaborative groups, independent work and small group interventions make up the daily math block. Flooding during math blocks provides below grade level students extra support through additional small group interventions. Interventions include On Cloud Nine (Lindamood-Bell), DreamBox, and Do-the Math (Marilyn Burns). Each of these interventions provide tiered lessons that allow the students to work on standards at their own level and are paced based on the understanding of the concepts. These lessons are also spiraled to reinforce all grade level concepts. With regards to above grade level students, each grade contains an accelerated class offering compacted curriculum and a faster pace. The accelerated curriculum is project-based and developed around Daggett's Rigor and Relevance Framework to above-grade level students with material.

Teachers use the district-adopted textbook Science: A Closer Look (McMillan/McGraw-Hill) as the main resource to support teaching the Colorado Measures of Academic Success for science. Supplemental resources include Discovery Work (Houghton/Mifflin) and Weather Climate (Prentice Hall). Students are exposed to science concepts using a variety of language and learning modalities. To ensure foundational concepts are mastered, teachers use inquiry-based learning, small groups, and direct instruction. While engaging in content-specific nonfiction text, teachers reinforce informational text reading and writing standards to ensure students are making cross curricular connections. Brain Pop and Brain Pop Jr. (web-based interactive videos), science videos (Bill Nye), and 4th quarter science fairs also help students review and retain science concepts.

Social Studies content is covered through a variety of engaging interdisciplinary tasks. Non-fiction reading standards are often addressed through the content of social studies. When specifically addressing the content, teachers use the adopted text The Colorado Story (Gibbs Smith), as well as Scholastic Readers and Colorado Studies Weekly. Social Studies instruction in primary grades focuses on map skills and early geography, as well as our place within families and communities. In intermediate level classrooms, students interact with non-fiction text and primary source documents to begin to understand geography, economics, history, and civics. Students communicate ideas and responses to text through teacher created Document Based Questions (DBQs) and essays.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Soaring Eagles' high expectations and standards are across all curriculum and subject areas, including Art, Music, and Physical Education (P.E.). These specialty classes meet weekly with students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Incorporating the district's curriculum maps, they address the essential skills and

knowledge students need to have in every grade. These classes have their own objectives and demonstrations of learning (DOL) posted for every class. Students are expected to write to prompts in every class, whether about a piece of art they created or a skill they just learned in P.E.

Soaring Eagles offers extra-curricular activities and programs for all students. P.E. has a sports club for third through fifth grades that meets once a week to expose students to sports such as volleyball, basketball, and kickball. During this thirty-minute time, students are introduced to the sport and taught its necessary skills. The music teacher has a beginner and advanced band club for students in fourth and fifth grades that meet once a week where students learn how to play a particular instrument. Through a partnership with a local music shop, students are able to rent out an instrument of choice at a discounted price. At the end of the year, band students perform in a school wide assembly to showcase their new skills, perhaps piquing the interest of future participants. The fine arts teacher allows kindergarten through fifth grade students participate in various art shows throughout the Colorado Springs area, as well as hosting an art show at our school to feature work done throughout the year.

Other Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) are offered before school Monday through Friday and facilitated by our teachers. DreamBox, an online math program; Read Naturally, an online fluency program; keyboarding; and Barton tutoring present students with a chance to enhance their skills at no cost to their families. Other clubs in the building are Science Matters, a program for first through fifth grade students to explore new concepts through hands-on experiments. In an effort to get students reading literature that they may not pick for themselves, Battle of the Books is also offered throughout the year to fifth grade students. They then compete both District and city-wide to exhibit their knowledge of the books.

We take pride in our commitment to incorporating technology in the classroom, allowing teachers to enhance instruction and students opportunities to become 21st century ready. Each class is equipped with a SMART board, document camera, and laptop. Teachers are also given an iPad, making the internet readily available during small group instruction. To promote independent work on research, writing assignments, and math skill improvement through programs such as DreamBox, third grade classrooms have seven laptops in each class for student use; fourth and fifth grades have two rooms each with laptops for every student. Those students use Google docs to complete online writing assignments, as well as Edmodo, which is used to encourage after hours academic discussions between students. The two fifth grades that have computers are also equipped with SMART Sync, which allows the teacher's notes to appear in live time on the individual computers. In addition, we also have two computer labs, giving primary students the opportunity to build essential skills through programs such as DreamBox, ABCmouse, and Typing.com.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

We believe that our success can largely be attributed to our flooding model used in reading. All students are tested when they begin school and then leveled into an appropriate literacy group within their grade level. These fluid groups allow students to receive an hour and a half of targeted reading instruction at an appropriate level. The group with the highest needs receives the most support from our paraprofessionals, ELD teacher, and special education teachers. During this time, a variety of instructional approaches are used to meet the needs of low-level learners and high-achieving students. Differentiated assignments, leveled passages, and accommodations based on the needs of individual learners aid in the teaching and practicing of specific skills in a small group setting. Programs such as LIPS, Seeing Stars, Visualize & Verbalize, Phonics for Learning, Saxon Phonics, Read Naturally are led by teachers and highly trained paraprofessionals. Beyond the literacy block, small intervention groups provide targeted practice in specific areas of deficit. On Cloud 9 (Linda Mood-Bell) and Do the Math (Marilyn Burns) serve as two math interventions. All interventions are progress monitored to ensure appropriate placement and support.

We are considered a Gifted and Talented magnet school, offering one class per grade level for those identified through CogAT and other high performing students. Accelerated and advanced curriculum, project-based learning, and differentiated assignments are used to meet the needs of these students. Small groups are designed to foster inquiry and discussion. Teachers facilitate extended instruction in small groups that are designed to stretch student thinking about a given topic.

Each grade level has developed a data notebook used to track all students, whether they are at risk, on track, or excelling. In order to ensure success for students performing below grade level, a body of evidence is used to collect baseline information and direct tiered instructional strategies. Weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLC) meetings take place in order to collaborate and evaluate data to ensure high levels of student learning. During our monthly data meetings, the grade level team, paraprofessionals assigned to that grade, the special education teacher, school counselor, and assistant principal gather to evaluate data and determine interventions and resources for students that are not making sufficient academic or behavioral progress.

4. Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:

A variety of formative and summative assessments are used to improve student and school performance. Prior to the beginning of the school year, teachers analyze results of previous year state assessments to identify trends within sub-groups to inform instruction. This includes data from the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), and district Curriculum Based Measures (CBM). As a team, we use these results to systematically improve student learning and guide instruction. Teachers focus on sub-groups and look for strengths and weaknesses in order to adjust instruction based on incoming students. Making adjustments assures we are able to maintain high levels of achievement. All K-5 students take CBM assessments mid-year, which provides the teachers data that addresses the growth and mastery of the standards instructed during the first semester. State and national test results are mailed directly to families to ensure parents are informed of their student's academic achievements. School and District web-sites also contain links for parents to access their child's results directly from the Colorado Department of Education.

Formative assessments are used systematically to ensure student learning and guide instruction. These include daily demonstrations of learning (DOL), DreamBox data, teacher-created constructed responses in all content areas, and quarterly STAR (Renaissance Learning) tests in the areas of math and reading. We also use DIBELS to progress monitor all students, targeting our below-grade level students weekly; at-risk students biweekly; and on-level students once a month to guarantee continued growth. With progress monitoring and formative assessment data, teachers utilize flexible grouping and provide interventions for specific areas as indicated by the results. Since grouping is flexible, these interventions are constantly changing and teachers are adjusting their lessons to meet the needs of students in the groups. Student created goals in all subject areas allows students to take responsibility for their own learning and track their own academic success regardless of their ability level. These systems ensure our students maintain high academic performance. Weekly folders (graded work and school and classroom newsletters), bi-weekly progress reports, quarterly report cards, emails, phone contact, and parent/teacher conferences keep parents informed on the academic progress of their child.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

We work to provide a strong and positive environment for both students and staff. Following the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) model, we have created SOAR (Safety, Organization, Attitude and Respect), a set of school wide rules for the classroom and all common areas. These rules give our staff a common language to communicate expectations. Students are recognized monthly for outstanding SOAR behavior. Each classroom teacher selects two students to be honored. Pictures of our Soaring Eagles of the Month are displayed by the front doors to inspire the entire student body.

Academic success can be partly attributed to the variety of strategies that keep students engaged and motivated. These include multiple response strategies, Kagan models of collaborative learning, small group instruction, positive reinforcement, and goal setting. Academic success is celebrated at Soaring Eagles. Our school believes that Accelerated Reader (AR) is an outstanding motivator for students, encouraging them to read every night and take reading comprehension quizzes. Students in the upper grades set their own goals for the AR points, and therefore are more invested in reading. Students are given an opportunity to choose prizes from the AR store weekly as they make progress towards their quarterly goal. Additionally, semester awards ceremonies allow students in all grade levels to earn certificates and medals based upon their academic performance and growth within various subjects. Parents are invited to celebrate their students' success.

To aid in our students' social and emotional development, our school counselor delivers biweekly lessons tailored to the specific needs of students in each grade. The Department of Defense has allocated funds for an additional counselor that supports our military families. Both counselors host a lunch group to provide students a chance to develop basic social skills with their peers and mediate conferences to help students work through minor quarrels. Our counselors also work with classroom teachers to develop behavior plans and reward systems, therefore minimizing disruptions to the classroom environment.

Our school recognizes the importance of teachers feeling valued and supported. We have a peer recognition program which allows staff to acknowledge colleagues. Our administration values our expertise and opinions; the Building Leadership Team consists of teachers at each grade level, and makes decisions involving the direction of our school. Administrators consistently guide teachers to reach their full potential by giving constructive feedback through spot observations, encouraging teachers to pursue leadership opportunities, and keeping an open door policy.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Soaring Eagles works with family and community members for student success and school improvement. At the district level, we have a parent group called Very Important Parents (V.I.Ps). This group is comprised of parents who have taken the time to go through a background and fingerprinting process in order to assist with children in the classroom. At Soaring Eagles, we use our VIP parents to work with children in one-on-one settings on necessary skills.

Our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meets monthly to discuss concerns, fundraising opportunities, and plan school events. Our PTO alone has raised over \$13,000! This money has supplied various technologies for classrooms as well as financial assistance for our families in crisis. In one instance, a family's toddler was diagnosed with terminal cancer; a school wide dance was held, with all proceeds going to the family.

Soaring Eagles also works to build community at our family nights. At literacy night, teachers at every grade level present strategies for parents to work with their children in areas like phonemic awareness and phonics skills, comprehension strategies, and online programs to practice reading skills. Each child in attendance receives a free book. Art shows, music concerts, award ceremonies, talent shows, and continuation ceremonies also serve as ways to celebrate student successes.

Our community also extends to universities in the Colorado Springs area. We open our classrooms to multiple students pursuing education, whether they are gathering field hours or actively student teaching. The use of student teachers allows us to provide additional small groups during instruction, as well as interventions. With this partnership, we are able to train the teachers of the future while giving our classrooms an extra set of hands.

Because of our growing military population, the partnership between local military outlets and Soaring Eagles has strengthened. At our first annual Color Run fundraiser, a group of soldiers volunteered their time to help facilitate operations and interact with our students and their families. They are also visible at our monthly homework celebrations, where students who complete all of their work are commended through fun activities and crafts.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development at Soaring Eagles is closely aligned with the school's and district's action plans and goals. These goals are based on collective data from state assessments, RTI, and Harrison School District's curriculum based measures.

Embedded staff development has been critical to the success of our school. We have a literacy coach who is available on a daily basis to model and provide feedback on lessons. They design trainings such as the usage of DIBELS. With ever-improving technology, our staff is trained on best practices for incorporating technology in a relevant manner. Our paraprofessionals receive training on how to provide quality small group instruction. Our support personnel are so well-trained that when outside educational leaders observe in our classrooms, they frequently ask, "Who is the classroom teacher?" Additionally, many of our staff members are experts in at least one curriculum area and mentor other staff in content and classroom management.

In order to improve instructional knowledge, teaching techniques, and leadership density, we have a two-pronged approach. Staff members offer interactive presentations in their area of expertise, thus increasing the knowledge of the staff and building the leadership skills of the professional providing the training. Having these content experts available on site is invaluable, as staff development is an on-going process rather than a one-time experience.

We have also committed to videotaping classroom lessons, PLCs, data meetings, and the RTI process. These video exemplars are shown during staff development and are saved for teachers that want to access them at a later date. This has provided resources for teachers who may not see themselves as an expert in a particular area and has developed a culture of staff development in our entire building. Book studies on current educational topics give our teachers dedicated time to reflect on their teaching craft. When staff members take off-campus trainings, they bring back new learning to share with the staff. Certainly, a large part of our success is that we dedicate time to showing teachers how to do something better, rather than just telling them how.

Soaring Eagles is dedicated to providing the best education possible for our students and believe that we can do that by continuing to improve instructional knowledge and teaching techniques for our staff through site-based professional development opportunities.

4. School Leadership:

Soaring Eagles is made up of many leaders. Our administrators encourage our autonomy as professionals, allowing us to take initiative in our own classrooms and on school-wide teams. At every grade level and in every specialty area in the school, there are driven professionals that strive to be their very best for our students. This drive encourages us to develop the best curriculum and incorporate the most up to date technology and teaching strategies possible. In addition to the leadership from our administrators (principal and two assistant principals), there is leadership from grade level leaders, our instructional coaches, school counselor, the front office team, and paraprofessionals in the building.

To build leadership density, our principals conduct day-long leadership retreats for school-wide grade level leaders twice a year. These retreats help set the social and academic focus for the school year and determine how school and district initiatives will be implemented with fidelity. Our staff is active on various school committees including PTO, student council, Healthy Schools team, and more. As a model school, we are asked to join district committees and give presentations at the district level as well. Veteran faculty members are paired with new staff to act as mentors and regularly give trainings for staff development. Even veteran paraprofessionals come alongside new paras to support them in understanding building expectations and offer support in running small groups. Our administrative team has also been part of a panel at the state level answering questions about what makes our school so successful. We have had leadership teams from schools around the state observe our classrooms to see our success in action.

Nearly half of the teaching staff has qualified for Distinguished Teacher status by the Harrison School District rigorous evaluation standards. This distinction is the result of high student achievement data, leadership contributions, and high caliber instruction. Building leadership density is truly a vital building block of our school success.

Our leadership extends to area universities as several student teachers are placed under the guidance of our veteran staff for year-long experience of observing quality classroom management and effective instruction.

Students are given leadership responsibilities as well. They can join Student Council, be classroom leaders by leading student projects, or leading by example. From administrators and staff to students and community members, leaders are found all over Soaring Eagles

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The success of our students, regardless of their socioeconomic or cultural backgrounds, can be attributed to one major component: the flooding model. All students are tested when they begin school and then leveled into an appropriate, fluid literacy group within their grade level. During this block of time known as “flooding,” eight paraprofessionals implement a push-in model in order to provide small group reading instruction and interventions for students of all ability levels. The small group nature of flooding allows teachers and paraprofessionals to provide invaluable qualitative student information, detecting patterns in thinking, motivation, and behavior that are integral to meeting the needs of the whole child.

Because our goal is getting as many qualified, trained individuals working with as many students as possible, paraprofessionals are trained in programs such as Lindamood-Bell (math and literacy), Susan Barton (an Orton-Gillingham, multi-sensory intervention), Saxon Phonics, sight words, DIBELS, Aimsweb and Read Naturally. They also implement teacher-created interventions in order to remediate and extend learning for all students. Progress monitoring is done frequently by both paras and the classroom teachers to guarantee the interventions are appropriate and effective.

Grade level teachers and paraprofessionals collaborate every Monday during PLC, as well as once a month during data meetings, to analyze dis-aggregated data in order to develop or modify interventions, extensions, and small group instruction. Data is kept for each student, whether they are underachieving or high-performing, in grade level data binders. These binders track progress to benchmark goals, as well as serve as a record of interventions and academic progress. Data notebooks are passed to the next grade level each year.

Our cycle of “teach, collect data, analyze, modify, repeat” has allowed teachers and paraprofessionals to be truly prescriptive in their instruction, which has created immense student success. This success has not only been demonstrated within the classrooms of Soaring Eagles, but has also been confirmed when compared with state and national data. Forty percent of our ELD population has achieved a level 5 or 6 on Access Testing, with the state average attaining only 15%. In addition, PARCC data has also demonstrated that our model is clearly working. We are in the 92nd percentile in the state in English Language Arts (for both reading and writing), and the 88th percentile for math. Our flooding model is the one practice that most greatly contributes to our students’ constant and extraordinary academic success.