

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

Name of Principal Andrea H. Burkiett

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

Official School Name Jacob G. Smith Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 210 Lamara Drive

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

City Savannah State GA Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 31405-4216

County Chatham County

Telephone (912) 395-6530 Fax (912) 303-6538

Web site/URL http://internet.savannah.chatham.k12.ga.us/schools/jgs/default.aspx E-mail vernon.cole@sccpss.com

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. Thomas Lockamy Jr. E-mail Thomas.Lockamy@sccpss.com

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

District Name Savannah Chatham County Public School System Tel. (912) 395-5600

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 Ms. Jolene Byrne

(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):
- 35 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 9 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 11 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 55 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	9	13	9
K	34	40	74
1	53	47	100
2	52	44	96
3	41	41	82
4	37	40	77
5	26	50	76
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	252	275	527

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2 % Asian
 - 49 % Black or African American
 - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 42 % White
 - 5 % 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: 9%

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	32
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	15
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	47
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	495
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.095
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	9

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

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 46 %
Total number students who qualify: 241

8. Students receiving special education services: 10 %
53 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.

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

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3
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	24
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	13
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.	3

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	98%	98%	97%	99%	98%
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.

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

Excelsior Per Academiam! Onward and upward through education!

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

Jacob G. Smith Elementary is both a neighborhood and lottery specialty school for grades Pre-Kindergarten - Fifth grade students. Students who live in our attendance zone attend Jacob G. Smith automatically and with no entrance criteria. Students who do not live within our attendance zone, but live in Savannah-Chatham County, may apply for a lottery seat at Jacob G. Smith if they meet the following academic criteria:

Kindergarten - no academic criteria

1st Grade - DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) Composite Score 132 or higher, minimum 80 GPA in 5 core subjects, and E or S in conduct

2nd Grade - 5th Grade - Meet cut scores on both the SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory) and MAP (Measures of Academic Progress), minimum 80 GPA in 5 core subjects, and E or S in Conduct

PART III – SUMMARY

Jacob G. Smith Elementary, established in 1950, is named for local philanthropist, Jacob Grass Smith. It is tucked away in midtown Savannah, GA, within the residential neighborhood of Ardsley Park, created as Savannah's first automobile subdivision, and the Medical Arts district. Surrounded by both single and multi-family homes in a variety of architectural styles dating from the 1920's through the 1960's, JGS neighbors with Habersham Village, a variety of locally owned specialty stores and restaurants situated in the center of this quaint neighborhood. The support JGS receives from these businesses is continually evident through mentor partnerships, annual events, and monetary donations. The village is a favorite of JGS families since students are able to safely walk to and from the village area, providing the opportunity to develop social skills and independence. With Savannah's medical complex located to the east and south of the school and the close proximity of Hunter Army Airfield, families associated with the military or medical communities find JGS an excellent school choice.

JGS is consistently recognized locally, statewide, and nationally for promoting the physical health and safety of students. The creation of fitness stations and funding to increase wellness activities is a result of monetary awards. Safe Routes to Schools honored JGS with Bronze recognition in 2010, Gold recognition in 2011 and 2012, and Coastal Georgia Partner School of the Year in 2012.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Our Georgia Pre-K Program uses the High Scope Curriculum and the Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS). JGS begins instruction with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies as the curriculum in grades K-5. These standards provide the rigorous academic expectation for students in each grade level and serve as a guide for teachers in creating meaningful learning experiences for what our children should know and be able to do.

For many students, learning at JGS begins in our Pre-K classroom. Students who attend our Pre-K learn phonemic awareness and phonics skills that lay the foundation for reading. Students learn valuable beginning math skills through calendar math and exploration with manipulatives. Students learn cognitive and social skills and apply those skills directly through developmentally appropriate play. Students are provided opportunities to problem solve and explore their environment, as it relates to reading and math, at their own pace. The Pre-K program within our school is invaluable. Each year, approximately 85% of our Pre-K students move on to our kindergarten classrooms. Kindergarten and Pre-K teachers collaborate to ensure the Pre-K curriculum is rigorous and prepares students for kindergarten.

JGS is an environment rich in the written word. Teaching students how to read and write begins the moment they walk through our doors for Pre-Kindergarten. Students in the early grades consistently engage in multisensory phonics lessons which create a solid foundation of phonemic awareness and phonics. This foundation is essential for the development of their fluency and comprehension in upper elementary grades. Reading and writing instruction are significantly enhanced in all grades through our Latin program. Latin classes provide students with the tools and background knowledge to decode word meanings. Students are taught Greek and Latin Root Words at an early age so they are able to break words into parts for the purpose of comprehending text. Teachers find extreme value in students having a rich vocabulary; therefore, students read a significant amount of nonfiction text. The intense focus on vocabulary and nonfiction reading sets the stage for students to write across all subjects and prepares them for document based writing in 4th and 5th grade.

JGS creates student-centered math classes that focus on rigorous and cognitively engaging learning experiences. Teachers utilize the workshop model for organizing their math lesson. The workshop structure includes a mini lesson, cooperative work time with manipulatives with an emphasis on math talk, and a closing for students to summarize their learning and defend their math reasoning. Students are engaged in problem based learning and are required to find multiple solutions to each problem. Students are taught Model Drawing as our school-wide problem solving process to ensure consistency of practice as they move through each grade. Students learn the importance of modeling in math as a concrete strategy before they move onto more abstract, algorithm based math. Model Drawing teaches students to begin each math problem by writing an answer statement. This is the basis for constructed response writing in math, as well as in other subject areas. Teachers encourage higher level thinking by incorporating mental math into their daily instruction. Students focus on the relationship between numbers and learn to “think outside the box” and look for multiple ways to solve problems. Mental math strategies emphasize the importance of using math vocabulary to defend their thinking.

JGS’s science instruction is focused on providing students with real life application and hands-on learning. Students are encouraged to be curious and to question their everyday experiences through inquiry based learning. To maintain this style of learning, teachers provide simulations and experiments that utilize the steps of the scientific method. Teachers use reflective journaling to monitor students’ discovery of how science impacts their lives. Beginning in 3rd grade, students are encouraged to participate in the district science fair to deepen their understanding of science and to apply what they have learned to solve real life problems and create viable solutions. Students participate in multiple field trip experiences as a result of our community partnerships with the local wildlife center, the local Army Airfield science center, national parks, and nearby university. These learning experiences provide memorable opportunities to see hear and touch the science our students are learning about and which surrounds them every day.

JGS's social studies curriculum is designed to be integrated across all core content. Lower elementary students use leveled reader biographies to teach historical figures, allowing teachers to incorporate reading fluency and comprehension skills with their history lessons. Upper elementary students move into using Document Based Questions (DBQs) to analyze primary and secondary source documents that not only teach historical content but teach students to make personal connections with history. Students learn to write about their analysis and explain their connections in a structured format with a thesis statement and supporting details. Journal writings and analytical classroom discussions further allow students to relate their own lives to events in history. Graphic novels ignite students' interest in learning about historical events in a more modern fashion. History comes alive for students when they participate in walking field trips throughout Savannah, visit historical sites, and participate in annual parades and celebrations.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

We believe students' strengths should be nurtured outside the core curriculum. Students should have the opportunity to explore interests and develop talents at an early age that will support their academic, social, and emotional growth. JGS students are provided many learning experiences through specialized instruction in art, music, band, physical education, and Latin as a world language. All students rotate through each of the special areas for one week out of each month, rather than a day-to-day schedule. This allows for continuity of instruction and completion of projects.

Our Art program provides structured experiences that set the stage for students' exploration of choice and decision making through art. Students are exposed to many art mediums including crayons, markers, paint, oil pastels, collage, sculpture, and ceramics. They learn about master artists and how their work impacts the modern art world. Students practice life skills when collaborating on ideas and sharing supplies in a common work space. Critical thinking is practiced daily when students analyze artwork and make choices for their own pieces. Student artwork is always on display in the school and is often displayed throughout the community and at various venues in Savannah. A collaborative art project is displayed in the spring each year to showcase all students and their talent.

Music introduces students to reading music and exposes them to music theory and music history. Students study a variety of genres which include classical, jazz, folk, ballads, modern, pop, rock and rap, and come from a wide variety of cultures. Students learn how music can be used to express thoughts and feelings as well as how music connects to reading, math, social studies, and science. Students learn to produce music through singing and learn to appreciate music through listening and interpreting. Students in kindergarten, first, and second grade participated in the Carnegie Hall Music Explorers Program. This program provides a music curriculum, which is incorporated into each classroom. Students learn about musicians while in Music class and twice each year participate in the Music Explorers performance and concert. Chorus is offered to students in upper elementary grades, during which time students receive vocal skills instruction. Students in grades 1-5 have the option of participating in piano. Music comes alive for students when performing for our school, throughout the community, and for the state.

JGS is one of six district elementary schools offering Beginning Band to fifth grade students; 40% of whom elected to participate. JGS is one of three elementary schools offering Beginning Band to fourth grade students; 62% of whom elected to participate. Band students learn how to read and play music on an instrument of their choice. Participation in band enriches students' understanding of music theory and music history, extending what they learn in music class. Full band meets during the specials rotation and instrument sections meet in the morning for small group, instrument specific instruction.

The Physical Education program instills the knowledge and understanding of rules while promoting physical fitness and the development of motor skills. Instruction incorporates physical fitness and wellness, including muscular strength, muscular endurance, aerobic capacity and flexibility. Students learn to enjoy physical activity while also developing the personal attributes of cooperation, tolerance, sportsmanship, leadership, respect and honesty. Students are encouraged to maintain a high level of sportsmanship as they play a variety of sports including basketball, baseball, soccer, tennis, golf, and floor hockey.

JGS is the only elementary school in the state of Georgia to have a Latin Education program. Our Latin program focuses on exposing children to the origins of our English language and culture. Students begin by learning the “Pledge of Allegiance” in both English and Latin. Students learn about Greek and Roman battles, foods, people of power, and mythology. In the lower elementary grades, students focus on Latin vocabulary for greetings, numbers, colors, items, and places. Middle elementary students learn to say phrases and have basic one-on-one conversations. Upper elementary students learn to read simple Latin passages and learn to translate English passages into Latin. Latin directly connects with students’ curriculum standards when they reach third grade. They learn Greek and Latin root words which directly increases their vocabulary and improves their reading comprehension.

Technology is highly integrated within our core and specialized instruction. Lower elementary students visit the stationary computer lab twice a week to play interactive games that support their reading and math instruction. Upper elementary students share laptops in the classroom where they learn to research topics and learn basic typing skills. Teachers use a computer based lesson plan program and cloud drives to facilitate collaboration of instructional planning across vertical teams.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

JGS takes pride in providing instructional methods and interventions that encompass all types of learners and push students to high levels of achievement. Students are administered district benchmark assessments three times each year in the areas of reading and math. Benchmark assessment results are used as a guide for determining the most appropriate instructional path for students.

All students have individual academic needs. Needs Based Instruction (NBI) is the key instructional practice used throughout our school which reduces student/teacher ratios and allows for targeted instruction based on student needs. NBI is one period of instruction per grade level, during which data driven, small group instruction is utilized. Classroom, gifted, early intervention, and special education teachers each take a small group of students to provide instruction based on their individual reading or math strengths and weaknesses. Flexible grouping is used and group placements change as students’ progress is frequently monitored.

Teachers incorporate technology throughout whole group and NBI instruction to create individualized learning paths for differentiated instruction in the areas of reading and math. The programs we use engage students in learning by setting goals and providing content focused game time as a reward for achievement. Students are able to access these programs from both school and home, allowing us to provide tools for parents to engage with their children in academically appropriate ways.

When NBI is not enough support for students in either reading or math, some students may need support through Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is a collaborative problem solving process during which intense interventions, frequent progress monitoring, and high levels of parent to school communication occur. Teachers may use the double dose of their phonics program to provide targeted phonics instruction for students who struggle to decode or use norm-referenced vocabulary and comprehension programs to shore up students’ deficits with reading. Teachers may use computerized programs with individualized learning paths to focus on specific math skills. Teachers collaborate every 4 weeks with their grade level peers, administration, special education teachers, counselor, and support personnel, such as behavior analysts, school psychologist, school social worker, and district staffing specialists. This high level of collaboration leads to effectively identifying strategies that are successful in closing students’ achievement gaps. At times, this process leads to a referral for psychological testing and special education services through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Ten percent of JGS, 53 students are served through Special Education (SPED) services with IEPs. Most students receive their specialized instruction in the general education classroom through the Inclusion model. Services by the classroom teacher and a SPED teacher or paraprofessional provide students instruction in the general education curriculum while also providing instruction for IEP goals and objectives. Students receiving speech, occupational or physical therapy receive their services through the Separate Classroom model.

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

Assessment data is a critical component to the ongoing decision making process used to inform instruction. In 2014, students were assessed in third, fourth, and fifth grades using the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). Scores indicated that our students met or exceeded benchmark expectations in the areas of Reading and ELA at 99%, Mathematics at 96%, Science at 96% and Social Studies at 98%. CRCT results revealed that our Students with Disabilities (SWDs) subgroup performed at a rate indicating an achievement gap when compared to our All Students population. In 2014, 91% of SWD students met or exceeded Reading and ELA, while only 75% met or exceeded in Math, 77% in Science, and 82% in Social Studies. In an effort to close this achievement gap, we utilize benchmark assessments with frequent progress monitoring, Needs Based Instruction, collaborative data review, and high levels of parent communication.

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Next and m-CLASS are the benchmarks administered individually to all kindergarten and first grade students. DIBELS Next assesses early reading in phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency, while DIBELS m-CLASS assesses early math skills. Results from these assessments inform teachers of the students performing at benchmark, below benchmark, or well below benchmark. Students in grades 2-5 take the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) computerized benchmark assessments three times per year. SRI assesses students' reading level with a focus on vocabulary and inferencing skills. MAP assesses students' math ability across multiple domains of math. Benchmark scores are identified at each grade level as a minimum for students to achieve by the end of the year.

These tools are essential to planning and guiding whole group and NBI instruction at all grade levels for reading and math. Teachers meet in Team Huddles each Tuesday with administration to analyze results and collaboratively plan instruction. Students are placed in small NBI groups for differentiated instruction based on their individual strengths and weaknesses. Students take frequent formative assessments to provide ongoing information to teachers for the purpose of planning instruction for remediation and enrichment. Upon the completion of units of study, students take summative assessments for the purpose of grading and mastery.

Benchmark results are shared with students and parents after each administration and goals are set for the following benchmark period. A letter of explanation to parents is included with each score report to explain how parents can provide support at home in the various reading and math areas. The results are discussed in parent/teacher conferences twice per year. During conferences, parents are taught strategies to assist their children and provided a demonstration of resources available on our school website. The school newsletter is sent home monthly and includes a plethora of instructional resources for parents. The newsletter also reminds parents of the required benchmark goals for the assessments at each grade level. PTA meetings are utilized to share resources with parents and provide tips for assisting children at home. Classroom newsletters are sent home weekly with grade specific tips and strategies that will directly impact students reaching their goals.

Student learning and achievement are the number one priority at JGS. When district and statewide assessment scores are received, administrators and teachers review the data and plan remediation and acceleration according to what the data reveals. Students are divided into flexible groups and specific standards are addressed during the school day based on each student's strengths and weaknesses. Students are placed in groups to remediate, accelerate or enrich based on their specific needs. Additionally, JGS offers before-school tutorial for students, with instruction provided by teachers within our building. Students are grouped by grade level and attend one morning session focused on reading and/or one morning session focused on math. Teachers utilize the blended learning model for instruction to allow for as much targeted, individualized instruction as possible.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Walking into Jacob G. Smith is like a breath of fresh air. An immediate sense of warmth invites parents and visitors into our school. There is a hum that is unmistakably children working hard, exchanging and sharing their thoughts, teachers instructing and facilitating in rooms with doors wide open and laughter and conversation that comes with the joy of lunch and recess. Parents are frequently seen strolling the halls admiring student work, eating lunch with their children, volunteering in the classroom, and mentoring students. Smiles abound... staff, students, parents... because this is home.

Part of the warmth felt by all who enter our doors comes from the behaviors and attitudes exhibited by the students and the consistently communicated expectations. Students become leaders guided by the principles from the “Leader in Me” and “7 Habits of Happy Kids.” The 7 Habits explain what “good” behavior looks, feels and sounds like for our students, teachers, and parents. A very strategic process for implementation and communication of expectations was developed by our 7 Habits staff and administrative committee. During the first seven days of school, teachers read stories, share interactive videos, and teach songs about the habits. Grade specific assemblies are held during which administration relates each habit to student behavior in the classroom, hallway, lunchroom, bus, restroom, and playground. Parents receive educational pamphlets explaining each habit and how they can incorporate them into their home. Teachers select one student per day who receives the “Leader in Me” certificate for being a leader among their peers. These leaders are recognized on the morning announcements the following day for recognition and consistent examples of leadership behavior. When necessary, communication of student behavior is communicated through Conduct Notifications and Student Referrals that connect discipline infractions with one of the 7 Habits.

Students learn how to personally take charge of their lives and strive to be the “Leader in Me” each day. The result of this effort to be the leader creates a culture of happy, healthy, respectful, and kind children. At the end of each marking period we have a school-wide Habits 4 Life day. This is a day where students and teachers participate in hands-on activities that require them to implement the 7 Habits. Members from local businesses come to teach students yoga, water safety, nutrition, Heimlich procedures, Zumba, and dental hygiene with the focus of “Synergizing” and “Sharpening the Saw.” Staff provide activities that encourage students to “Seek first to understand and then to be understood” as they write bucket letters to one another, and create a school-wide mural depicting the 7 Habits for the front of the school. The day ends with an assembly during which students are recognized by grade level, for their academic accomplishments during the marking period; one leader from each homeroom is recognized. The engagement between students, teachers, and community members result in a school culture at JGS that is inviting and welcoming.

Additionally, our principal values her staff and works diligently to support and encourage them. She frequently attends parent conferences and RTI meetings, meets with teachers for planning, and encourages participation in personal and team professional learning opportunities. She visits classrooms to say “Good morning”, celebrates classroom achievement on tests, provides rewards for classes reaching behavior goals, and gives out “gold stars” to students who reach personal goals. She motivates and encourages staff throughout the school year with team building activities, such as creating gingerbread houses, spreading words of encouragement and appreciation with personal notes, and fostering opportunities for staff to build personal relationships outside of the work environment.

Furthermore, JGS encourages local businesses and establishments to partner with us to better educate our children. Their involvement, in turn, provides a sense of community that extends beyond the walls of the school building. Students learn to engage with others in a way that teaches them to consider others first and provides the opportunity for them to demonstrate their leadership abilities.

Walk through our doors and you will feel the warmth of a happy staff, students who embrace leadership, and parents and visitors who can’t wait to come back.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Each year the staff seeks ways to bring our families together to demonstrate that we are all on the same team! JGS has hosted a community basketball game with staff and students as the players and several kickball games at a neighborhood park that included staff, parents and students. Our school community has participated in Jacob G. Smith night at the local baseball stadium to celebrate reading success with all our students. Such events provide opportunities for us to get to know each other on a personal level. Next, we work on engagement events that support a common cause, such as the Pet Care and Adoption Fair. This street fair, held at our school, is a partnership between our PTA and local pet supply store. The event includes pet adoptions, low cost pet vaccinations, carnival games, food, contests, and basket auctions. Throughout the year, we have many similar events such as the Woof Woof 5k, Yarn Bombing Art project, Jump Rope for Heart, Donuts for Dads Book Fair day, SCAD Buzz Bus, Walk and Bike to School days, Fine Arts Showcase nights, Thanksgiving Feast, Gifted Education Day, Savannah Green Build planting project, and Oyster Roast. Events like these demonstrate to our students how they can be a part of their community team and the good that can come when people work together.

Building relationships with our parents and community partners has led to many learning opportunities for our students. We have mentor readers from a local church, a certified therapy dog, and parent volunteers who come weekly to read with some of our struggling readers. Our PTA hosts a read-a-thon fundraiser each year to promote reading in the home with all our students. Through affiliation with the local army base, universities, wildlife center, and historical center, our students participate in math, science, and historical learning opportunities. Students participate each year in music education programs provided by the local orchestra and university which introduce them to a variety of musical genres.

Teachers, parents, students, and community members partner together to support various charity organizations. Students raise money to support charity organizations for cancer, diabetes, and heart health. During the holidays, teachers and parents provide Thanksgiving baskets and Angel Tree gifts for students in our school who are in need. This past year, students collected new and gently used winter clothes, which were donated to two of our district elementary schools with low income families.

3. Professional Development:

Professional development is encouraged and supported by the principal and staff at JGS. We have a tiered approach set up for professional learning that mirrors the type of instruction we would provide our students. One day a week is reserved for after school meetings that rotate between leadership teams, committees, whole staff, and vertical meetings.

Team Meetings are held one Tuesday after school per month where in all certified staff members attend. Teachers complete book studies together, analyze school-wide data, plan for our 7 Habits implementation, and discuss budget decisions. One teacher from each team serves as a school representative and brings back important information from district-level content meetings. Content focused vertical teams meet once per month after school for reading/ELA, math, science, and social studies. During these vertical team meetings, teachers share resources, discuss standards, collaborate on strategies, and review common expectations. Team Captains, constitute our school's leadership team and meet monthly to determine the professional learning needs of our school based on data and plan for operational needs within the school. Finally, Communication, Assessment and 7 Habits committees meet monthly. These committees work to ensure we stay focused on our goals in terms of communication to our families and students, as well as to review and assess the impact of our professional learning activities on our student data.

Team Huddles (common planning) time play a vital role in the professional development our staff receives on a regular basis. During this time, teachers operate as professional learning communities to collaboratively plan instruction that implements what we have learned in our Tuesday rotations. Team Huddles receive feedback and guidance from our administration, our district's academic coaches and technology coaches. We analyze data, plan instructional strategies, discuss resources, and learn new strategies and ideas. In addition to weekly Team Huddles, grade level teachers receive one full-day professional learning day for the purpose of mapping out curriculum for the upcoming marking period.

Teachers map out lessons, designate timelines for assessments, and identify resources for effectively meeting the standards.

The drive to individualize our teaching strategies to address our diverse student population is evident by the percentage of trained certified staff in areas that target both low and high achievers. One hundred percent of our teachers are trained in RTI as a problem solving process for assisting struggling students, as well as the computer program TIENet, used for progress monitoring RTI students. Additionally, 95.8% of our teachers carry a Gifted Endorsement which allows them to teach students in the Gifted Education Program. One School Accountability Plan goal is to increase the percentage of students who score proficient or distinguished in math on state standardized tests. This has led the way for 100% of our certified staff to become trained in areas of math instruction that include model drawing, number talks, and math workshops. Professional Learning logs are turned in at the end of the school year documenting the number of hours and type of professional learning individual teachers have participated in for the year. These logs further demonstrating we are indeed a team of lifelong learners.

4. School Leadership:

School leadership at JGS is focused on collaborative decision making between administration, staff, students, parents, and community members. Committees are strategically designed to involve all stakeholders in collaborative decision making. Stakeholders take an active role in our school, providing numerous models of leadership for our students. A collective voice is evident when these stakeholders come together.

Our principal values collaboration among her staff. Her leadership has set in motion groups such as Team Captains, Team Huddles and Team Meetings which require staff to engage in collaborative decision making. Each grade level has a designated Team Captain. Team Captains meet with the principal and assistant principal each month. They carry concerns, requests, ideas, and input to the monthly Team Captain meeting. This information is discussed and shared with team members during Team Meetings and Team Huddles. Our principal promotes a team atmosphere and encourages enthusiasm by purchasing team shirts and banners for staff and by displaying pictures of grade and departmental teams to show our school spirit. Teacher leadership is fostered through our rotating committees which are designed to include members from each team. Committees collaborate on decisions and make adjustments to school processes regarding hospitality, communication, assessment, wellness, 7 Habits, emergency procedures, media/technology, and data. Together we keep our focus on student achievement.

Parent and community leadership are evident through our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and our Local School Council (LSC). These groups of parent and community leaders work to create a “family feel” between the school and surrounding community. PTA brings parents and staff together to involve parents in their children’s education. This is accomplished through family engagement events, volunteer opportunities and fundraising activities for targeted instructional needs. LSC is a partnership between parents, staff and community business members for the purpose of increasing communication, community involvement and parent education. LSC seeks to increase the knowledge of our parents on how they can get involved with and support students’ academic growth.

Students are encouraged to utilize their leadership skills in a variety of ways. Teachers assign jobs to students within their classrooms and in the lunchroom, giving them the opportunity to be leaders among their peers. At the end of 3rd grade, students are recommended by their teachers for the Safety Patrol program based on the leadership skills they have demonstrated. Safety Patrol students patrol hallways, organize and deliver the live morning news program, run the school recycling program, assist with dismissal, get the computer lab running in the morning, and mentor younger students in reading and math. Additionally, at the end of the marking period, one student from each homeroom is recognized as the “Leader in Me” for exemplifying the “7 Habits of Happy Kids” throughout the marking period. These student leaders meet monthly with our school counselor to nominate teacher leaders and identify ways students can serve in leadership roles throughout our school.

Collaborative school leadership is woven throughout our administration, staff, parents, students, and

community. The collective voice that is created when these groups come together results in a laser like focus on student achievement and the growth of student leaders.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Over the past several years, Jacob G. Smith Elementary has grown from 386 students to over 500 students! We believe it is our strong commitment to a high level of collaboration between our staff, parents, and students that has allowed us to maintain our success as we continue to grow and to meet our high expectations. We are a family with the expectation of learning from each other, spending time together, and communicating with each other to achieve the end result of producing successful students.

JGS understands the value of communicating and planning with one another in order to maintain consistently high expectations for our students. For this reason, we schedule time every week for small group and whole group collaboration. We talk about our students, analyze our instruction, and review our data together. Through this collaboration we are able to maintain high expectations across all grade levels. Staff strategically seek out professional learning opportunities to improve our practice, engage with other professionals, and learn new strategies to challenge our students. We value each other's talents and work together to make our school successful.

Students in every grade level understand the importance of collaboration when it comes to their behavior and academics. Consistent language and behavior expectations create habits that lead to student and school success. Students know our expectations are the same no matter where they are in the building or which teacher is responsible for them. Similarly, students know that classroom time is learning time. We push them hard to do their very best. Students know their reading and math goals, their reading levels for the library, can tell you their grades and can tell you what grade they want to get on their next test. Just like teachers, students learn the value of communicating and working together. They learn to look to each other, and teachers, as a resource and learn how to be a resource for someone else.

Parents from our school community value the high level of collaboration and are eager to work together to reach our high expectations! Our school is sought out by parents through the lottery process or by moving into our neighborhood because we engage with our families to work as a team to keep our expectations high. They have seen our school grow over the past few years, and continue to comment on how our expectations have continued to remain constant. Parents and teachers form a partnership that fosters our high expectations and facilitates student success. Parents read with students, they volunteer for school events, they eat lunch with their children, and attend field trips. When students and parents run into academic and behavior struggles, we wrap our arms around them and pour every resources, strategy, and support into them. They know we will work with them to solve any problem. Parents comment that our school is warm, inviting and supportive. They want to be here and seek out opportunities to be involved.

We work hard to build relationships with students, parents, community, and each other to provide the framework for our high expectations to be met. When we meet those high expectations, we celebrate together! Having high expectations is more than just something we talk about. We live them, plan for them, teach them, and celebrate them.