

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 [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Mrs. Jan Castle

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

Official School Name William Yates Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 3600 Davidson Road

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

City Independence State MO Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 64055-3843

County Jackson

Telephone (816) 874-3740 Fax (816) 478-6137

Web site/URL http://www.bssd.net/Domain/28 E-mail jcastle2@bssd.net

Twitter Handle

https://twitter.com/wye_bulldogs 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. James Finley E-mail jfinley@bssd.net

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

District Name Blue Springs R-IV School District Tel. (816) 874-3200

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. Rhonda Gilstrap

(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):
- 13 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 20 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	24	39	63
1	34	32	66
2	33	30	63
3	42	36	78
4	39	34	73
5	42	36	78
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	214	207	421

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4 % Asian
 - 10 % Black or African American
 - 13 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 67 % White
 - 6 % 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: 21%

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	54
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	39
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	93
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	445
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.209
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	21

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 7%
28 Total number ELL

Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Urdu, Chinese, Arabic, Vietnamese, Samoan, Thai, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 41%
Total number students who qualify: 173

8. Students receiving special education services: 9%
39 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.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <u>3</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>11</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>13</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>5</u> Mental Retardation | <u>1</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |
| <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities | <u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 1
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	19
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals	7
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	96%	96%	96%	96%	95%
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.

Empowered children today, powerful leaders tomorrow.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

William Yates Elementary (WYE) is a full Title I school located in Independence, Missouri, within the Blue Springs R-IV School District (BSSD). Situated in eastern Jackson County, the BSSD is a suburban Kansas City metropolitan area public school system that provides high quality academic programming to families residing in the communities of Blue Springs, Lee's Summit, Grain Valley, and Independence. The principal community of Blue Springs is comprised of approximately 55,000 residents.

As one of 13 district elementary schools, WYE is child focused, family oriented, and community supported. As a neighborhood school, many students walk to and from or are dropped off and picked up by car each day. The student population of 421 K-5 students is diverse and eager to learn. Of the student population, 41% of the students qualify for the Federal free or reduced lunch program and 33% are minority. WYE houses two district Specialized Instruction Programs (SIP) – English Language Learner (ELL) and Intellectually Disabled (ID).

WYE has a strong, dedicated instructional staff with 27% of the teachers being at the school for 10 years or more and 90% possessing advanced degrees. Staff use their skills and talents to benefit students and have established an effective working relationship with parents and community partners (e.g., Epic Church, Bass Pro Shops, Chick-fil-A). WYE is also an active member of the Leader in Me alliance.

Under the direction of the prior principal, WYE embarked on a cultural change by adopting the Leader in Me model to shift the focus from behavior, dependency, and low expectations to self-directed learning, earned respect, shared-leadership, ownership, and high achievement within and outside the walls of the school. The present principal stepped right in to carry the mantle of altering stakeholder belief systems from one of we can't do this because our kids are economically challenged, English as a second language speakers, or have special needs, to no matter what the background or obstacle, we can maximize academic potential. Imparting this vision to parents and constantly reminding students of the ultimate prize – going to college – has been extremely powerful.

As shared by Roland S. Barth, "The nature of the relationships among the adults who inhabit a school has more to do with its quality and character and the accomplishments of its pupils than any other factor." WYE students learn what's necessary for academic success in any setting, including responsibility, goal setting and attainment, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, active listening, initiative, self-direction, cultural awareness, public speaking, presentation-making, grit, and teamwork. Instead of seeing children through the lens of a normal distribution curve, a new mindset was established, which is that every student is a capable leader.

A key component of WYE's success equation is evidence-based practice. To heighten individual performance accountability, attention is focused on SMART (i.e., specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and time based) goals and using data points (e.g., achievement, behavior, attendance, job performance) to gauge progress over time and assure achieved targets are replaced by new, more rigorous ones. WYE has gone public with benchmark artifacts – displaying them in classrooms, hallways, the multi-purpose room, etc. – and enacted a self-monitoring process whereby students reflect and report upon their growth via individual conferences with teachers and parents. Through a comprehensive approach, all stakeholders – from students to cafeteria workers – know where school achievement is (e.g., reading level, degree of math proficiency), what's necessary (e.g., improved attendance or behavior), and where things are supposed to go.

WYE staff are provided needs assessment identified, strengths-based professional development (PD). Dedicated collaboration time is directly supported by district core content instructional coaches who provide assistance with delivery, modeling, and progress monitoring, and facilitate reflective conversations about necessary improvements. Teachers do long-term planning to accelerate the learning process, are provided and expected to use the tools necessary to enact best instructional practice, and encouraged to assist each other any way possible. There is a strong sense of family and camaraderie, and success is shared, recognized, and publicly celebrated!

As a full Title I school, WYE conducts numerous off-hour activities, including afterschool tutoring and well-attended student and parent reading, math, and science night and weekend events. These experiences create a sense of partnership, reinforce that everyone is on the same page, and clearly illustrate everything accomplished is for and about the kids. Parents receive educational, “Make and Take It” resources for essential skill-building and support in the home. Another critical element is that translators ensure ELL students and their parents understand what is being communicated and can engage effectively. Parents and volunteers are also welcomed in the classroom, assist during curriculum-embedded field trips, and present on topics that help students make connections between classroom learning and the real world. Ultimately, the entire school community does everything possible to help all students achieve success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

At WYE, classroom instruction is learner centered and provided in a manner that goes beyond simple mastery by incorporating opportunities for students to create, follow interests, and explore passions. The Reading and English/Language Arts (E/LA) focus is on a balanced literacy approach – Pathways to Reading (PTR). PTR equips teachers to effectively address the literacy needs of beginning (K-2) and struggling (3rd grade up) readers. Via professional development (PD) provided by content expert, Terry Clinefelter, and district instructional coaches, training and support have improved the ability of classroom teachers to understand and apply the five scientifically validated core components of the reading process: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. PTR provides enrichment and prevention strategies for regular and special education teachers at all ability levels along the Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) continuum at WYE.

Formal literacy training and technical assistance have been provided to WYE staff by content experts in the areas of writing process (Ellin Keene), Writers' Workshop (Matt Glover, Katherine Bomer), and Readers' Workshop (Deborah Miller), with independent reading process skills such as decoding (the ability to figure out words) and comprehension (the ability to interact with the meaning of text) receiving emphasis. The approach facilitates mastery of the concepts and tasks, from simple to complex, that are required for and impact a student's ability to read. Other aspects of WYE's comprehensive literacy program include the grant funded Readers' Recess take home library project, the grant funded Raz-Kids audio book checkout initiative, the WIGS (Willy Important Goals) fluency and comprehension progress targeting and tracking process, and the Million Minute reading challenge. WYE has established a lab classroom environment for the purpose of developing, practicing, refining, modeling, and sharing effective E/LA skills; reflective collegial collaboration and improvement of professional expertise both in-house and outside the school and district; and active research, data collection, and broad dissemination of information. District common assessments and the SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory) program are used to gauge mastery of literacy-related curriculum content and learner objectives.

In math, there are defined learning tracks and grade specific, standards-aligned curriculum for K-2 and 3-5 students that advance from facts, operations, and procedural fluency to pre-algebra and geometry. Through high quality PD and coordinated workshops that provide a deeper, more coherent understanding of math; guidance and support from district math instructional coaches; direct contact with content experts such as Greg Tang; student-directed data and progression tracking; effective use of district common assessments; support, reinforcement, and enrichment experiences such as Math Workshop, Math Readers, Go Math, Reflex Math, and off-school hours tutoring; and a collegial atmosphere that encourages questions, dialogue, and meaningful interactions; WYE teachers effectively incorporate the strategies, techniques, and content necessary to help students make connections and navigate between levels, including the transition from elementary to middle school.

Interactive, hands-on Project Lead the Way (PLTW) STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) modules and the scientific method are used to help students think critically, investigate, research, problem solve, and innovate. WYE teachers participate in PD seminars in person and virtually with science content experts such as Mike Heithaus and work continuously with district instructional coaches to better engage students in science and inspire them to use their natural curiosity to explore the surrounding world. Some WYE staff were involved directly in a Federal grant funded summer outreach project – Science Matters – that focused on the study of different ecosystems and produced a science instructional video used in classrooms across the country. Science embedded field trips to the KC Zoo and local nature reserves also strengthen mastery of concepts through an immersive, real-life process.

Social studies content is interwoven throughout the core curriculum and progresses from the family, local community, state studies, and American history to basic economic principles and tenets of government. Instruction is project-based and designed for engagement with a variety of resources and then showing what's learned through performance-based assessments. This authentic approach takes into consideration

learner strengths and interests, incorporates support structures and opportunities for differentiated instruction, and helps reinforce the true mission of social studies at WYE, which is to provide students the knowledge, concepts, strategies, skills, and experiences needed to be productive, participatory citizens in today's challenging, diverse, and constantly changing world.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

At WYE, a full-time music teacher provides K-5 instruction once a week in a dedicated room via specialized content, appropriate equipment and technology, and an environment that is engaging, creative, and imaginative. PD is on-going and offered through workshops, conferences, or conventions; in-school or off-site seminars; and/or by artists in residence with current focus being on connecting music with core content learning and integration of current educational technologies. Curriculum and instruction are reinforced by an Orff Schulwerk approach featuring singing, dancing, playing instruments and games, improvising, composing, and collaborating to perform, experience, and learn. Evening grade level performances demonstrate classroom concepts at monthly PTA (Parent Teacher Association) general sessions. A choral musical group for older students meets weekly outside the regular instructional day and performs at various school, community, and business functions. In addition, select WYE 5th graders participate in the district's elite music ensemble to perform at the annual Singfest in late spring, and all K-5 students attend district Arts Partners presentations conducted by KC area elite performance groups (KinderKonzert, Nutcracker, Theatre for Young America, Paul Mesner Puppets).

K-5 visual arts instruction reflects a similar setting, cross-curricular delivery model, PD and formal curriculum, and technology support configuration as the music content area. Art instruction addresses concepts such as color, space, line, and form; product design and aesthetics; and exploration of art history and culture. WYE K-5 students provide curriculum-related art: for display in classrooms, school hallways, local retail centers and places of business, and within offices of community organizations and city government; as decorations for civic and recognition events such as the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast, Board of Education Appreciation Day, and Teacher of the Year event; and for entry in area, regional, and state art fairs and contests (e.g., PTA's annual Reflections Showcase).

Physical education (P.E.) is reflective of music and art practices and conducted in a large multi-purpose room or outdoors. WYE K-5 students are equipped with the fundamental skills, attitudes, and behaviors essential to ensure fitness, health and nutritional wellness, and effective participation in lifelong activities. Age-appropriate instruction emphasizes and facilitates efficient motion and movement patterns, promotes student-directed goal setting and accomplishment, accommodates body systems development, links concepts with core content across the curriculum, and provides exposure to a wide variety of activities. Programming also assists with establishing a healthy lifestyle and associated fitness capacities, and teaches the importance of safe practices. Finally, the elementary program addresses the personal-social skills essential for good sportsmanship, fair play, and meaningful, productive, and successful interactions with peers in team and competitive settings. Ancillary P.E. experiences include clubs (circus skills, sport stacking, Girls on the Run), award accomplishment (President's Physical Fitness, Jump Rope for Heart), swim safety instruction (Swim 2 Success project), and an all-school field day.

The Library Media Center (LMC) is essential to the WYE K-5 learning experience. Rapid changes in communication formats necessitate quality programming that enables students to build core content skills; access, evaluate, interpret, and apply information from print and non-print materials; effectively utilize current educational technology and software applications; and meet expected academic outcomes. The Library Media Specialist (LMS) follows a formal curriculum based on sequential standards, concepts, indicators, activities, and assessments. K-5 students attend the LMC on a weekly basis, participate in story time, and checkout lexile-leveled books for reading reinforcement and personal enjoyment within the home. Teachers are encouraged to be knowledgeable of available LMC resources and supports, to plan together with the LMS for cross-curricular integration, and to determine how best to conduct research in conjunction with project-based learning assignments.

A full-time counselor provides individualized and group supports to students, topical classroom presentations, and serves as family resource. Emphasis areas are family dynamics, making friends, stranger

danger, body safety, school adjustment, study skills, resiliency, behavior management, problem solving, and college and career preparedness. Exceptional education umbrella student needs are buoyed by resource and/or specialized instruction. Gifted education programming is available to qualifying grades 3-5 students through a rigorous, once per week, ability grouped with like peers, project-based, technology-supported, competition-oriented process. ELL and special education programming is inclusionary, mainstreamed, and as regular education/core aligned/cohort grouped as much as possible, and all WYE students benefit from differentiated, personalized interventions.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

Effective teaching and learning strategies such as scaffolding, shaping, connecting to prior knowledge, motivating, constructive feedback, and skill practicing, are used to provide a customized WYE school experience. All stakeholders – regular and special educators, administrators, the counselor, parents, and, when applicable, students – work together collaboratively to better understand and appreciate the relationship that exists between instruction, learning, assessment, and school success.

Through the school's Care Team – a cross grade level, multidisciplinary, evidence-based, decision-making group – professionals identify the nature, severity, and root cause of referred students' social, emotional, or cognitive needs, and define them operationally. Members share responsibility for determining skill levels; identifying environmental variables; targeting appropriate assessments and linking them to strengths, deficits, and supports (e.g., informal and miscue inventories, curriculum-based measures, criterion-referenced and standardized diagnostic achievement tests); conducting systematic observations and monitoring progress over time; collecting data from a variety of sources; and evaluating intervention outcomes (i.e., PBS methodology). Upon effecting pre-determined strategies, staff focus on treatment integrity to ensure application as designed. A systematic framework is employed, which encompasses teacher-made, curriculum-aligned measures, and engages students in self-directed performance monitoring. A visual synopsis of the integration process and achieved outcomes is provided graphically to explain collected data.

Instruction is direct, differentiated, and personalized, and graduates to a more project-, problem-, and performance-based approach as students advance from the primary to intermediate level (e.g., Pathways, PLTW). Reading, E/LA, math, science, and social studies incorporate workshop model methodology, and are reinforced, enhanced, and individualized via current educational technology. A variety of grouping configurations, participation approaches, and delivery formats strengthen classroom practice (e.g., pair-share, small groups, mini lessons, work stations, cooperative learning, book studies, Readers' Theater, A+ tutoring, push-in/pull-out) and result in deeper understanding as teachers facilitate learning, and students across ability and grade levels conduct authentic conversations about key concepts, track growth, and report on progress.

Tutoring is voluntary and invitational, held outside regular school hours, addresses learners' specific needs, and data-driven (e.g., class assignments, SRI and MAP scores). Flex time augments the daily schedule and allows students to receive concentrated, repeated attention on growth-designated areas (e.g., language reinforcement for ELL students). Intrinsic motivation and higher-order learning and intervention strategies, including self-directed goal setting, inferring/deductive reasoning, cause-effect inquiry, mental imaging, hands-on manipulation, and graphic organizers, are utilized to help students comprehend, link, visualize, actualize, be accountable, and expand their knowledge base.

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

WYE's objectives for assessment data use include: 1) engagement in high quality PD and scheduled instructional coach-led facilitation and/or modeling once per month to ensure delivery of effective instruction; 2) on-going, focused collection from multiple sources – responses on standardized, district developed, and teacher-designed tests, writing samples, and projects; and 3) meeting weekly to analyze, interpret, plan lessons, and adjust practice based on findings. Beyond weekly grade level meetings, staff also collaborate monthly as members of vertical teams. Work samples provide valuable information, point directly to specific academic standards, identify where students are struggling with concept understanding,

and guide determination of appropriate interventions.

At WYE, an evidence-based PBS approach addresses students' diverse learning and behavioral needs and fosters school improvement. Through a graduated level, tiered process incorporating individualized supports, goal setting, frequent self-directed monitoring, and pertinent assessment data, staff designate reading placement for each K-5 student. At the K-2 levels, DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) results, scores from periodic Pathways and A-Z Fluency assessments, and annual Terra Nova administration outcomes determine placement in, and set up for, reading intervention groups. At the 3-5 levels, staff use the SRI, district-developed common assessment, and annual MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) outcomes to establish tier placement. A similar approach is employed in the math content area with common assessments and annual MAP results providing a measure of student progress across the grade levels. All students receive core instruction, and those demonstrating "some risk" receive additional targeted assistance to supplement learning deficits. Students scoring "at risk" receive small-group and/or intensive one-on-one interventions in addition to core instruction.

Benchmark assessments (e.g., end-of-unit tests, writing prompts) provide a measure of learned skills, drive reflection on the effectiveness of teaching process, and illustrate the need for re-teaching, reinforcement, or enrichment. Formative common assessments are aligned with the Missouri Student Learning Standards, given to grade level students at specific times during the school year, and analyzed collectively by staff. Students and parents are provided frequent feedback specific to individual learning, and students analyze their performance to set achievement goals. All BSSD schools routinely report on academic progress and share growth with appropriate cabinet level personnel, the Board of Education, and the greater community at large.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

WYE staff work tirelessly to ensure a school environment that is welcoming, safe, and conducive to learning; promotes communication and interaction; builds a sense of belonging and self-esteem; and results in lofty performance and self-fulfillment. Expectations are high for all students and staff, progress is closely monitored by students and teachers, constructive feedback is provided promptly, and results are communicated to all pertinent stakeholders. Assessment data is used to evaluate and redesign instruction and content and identify necessary interventions. Achievements, accomplishments, and success are celebrated, praised, and rewarded (e.g., monthly all-school Team Rallies, Catching Leaders and Reading Goals bulletin boards, SIP Leader of the Month, PTA Appreciation Luncheon), and emphasis is placed on developing the skills, competency, and confidence necessary to exceed within and outside the classroom. High quality PD and instructional coach facilitation help staff acknowledge, reinforce, and/or enrich the different ways K-5 students process and master content.

WYE is clean, well-maintained, and orderly. Students are comfortable everywhere on campus, and class teacher to student ratios are generally less than 22 to 1. Instruction and activity areas are appropriate for users, including those attending the before and after school age care program – Prime Time. The playground is handicap accessible and features a padded, artificial surface. Classrooms are inviting and decorated with student-made work. Instructional materials and current technology effectively support the educational mission.

Responsive and respectful engagement is expected, and teachers interact and communicate with students in an attentive, caring, and friendly manner. Teachers are collegial, collaborative, and partner with students, parents, and administrators in the educational process. Student groupings vary in size and purpose and incorporate differentiated intervention and enrichment strategies. Important decisions affecting stakeholders are made on-site, with full participation by all segments of the school team, both classified and certificated. Staff are open to students' suggestions and input, and students have opportunities to develop and demonstrate leadership attributes (e.g., grades 3-5 Leader in Me initiative jobs and K-2 apprenticeships, Leadership Time character building meetings, classroom and personal mission statements). Staff and students are trained to de-escalate and resolve conflicts and prevent bullying (i.e., Olweus project). WYE is open to cultural diversity; warm and inviting to parents, volunteers, and patrons; and has established a strong sense of community. Morale and trust are high, and stakeholders are valued and encouraged to actively contribute to school success.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

WYE provides ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement, including implementation of the Leader in Me program. In this way, key stakeholders are effectively involved and leveraged in a manner that positively impacts the school. Families participate in a number of different ways such as attending academic and enrichment activities, providing external expertise, and advocating on behalf of school change or improvement initiatives.

Staff realize that parental expectations and home dispositions – the foundational attitudes, habits, knowledge, and skills students acquire through the family's approach to school and learning – are powerful factors affecting the success equation. Accordingly, through electronic or paper format (i.e., parent preference), teachers communicate frequently about covered concepts; post assignments, completion timelines and scoring rubrics; and report performance results (i.e., Connect links, Go and Reflex Math). PTA resource supported events target topics of interest (i.e., curriculum, instruction, and assessment; community outreach); are conducted before, after, and during school and on Saturdays; and highly attended by patrons (e.g., Pastries for Parents; Grandparents' / Special Person's and Field Days; Culvers, Chuck E Cheese, Roller Skating, Movie, Explore PLTW, and Greg Tang Math Nights, School Carnival, Bingo for Books, School Book Fair). Under the leadership of past and present administrators, the entire school community was catalyzed to make the Leader In Me program reality, which has already produced tangible

results related to increased attendance, reduced disciplinary referral rates, heightened academic achievement, and substantive improvement in the climate and culture. From a broader community perspective students and parents are involved in quarterly service projects (e.g., Harvesters food drive, Joy Jars, nursing home cards and decorations, Children's Mercy Hospital NICU baby blankets, campus cleanup, Valentine's for Veterans).

In relation to external expertise, parents and community patrons generously donate their time presenting about curriculum-related topics such as historical events; health, safety, and wellness; and giving back to the community. In addition, during WYE's annual Grandparents'/Special Person's Day, visitors share about how schools, curriculum, and instruction have evolved over the years. Periodic career awareness presentations are also made to help students make connections between classroom learning and current occupations.

Pertaining to advocacy, stakeholders are educated about student, school, and district needs so that they can take an active role as necessary at multiple levels of the system. Parents share in critical decisions affecting WYE, including those related to facility improvements, adoption of enhancement/enrichment programs, and district levy and bond referendum campaigns.

3. Professional Development:

The BSSD strongly believes that instruction and learning are improved through participation in high-quality PD. District curriculum and instruction team members tasked with designing and implementing professional-learning activities cull through available best practices research to identify evidence-based, manageable, and practical programming applicable to most educational settings (e.g., Pathways; Reading, Writing, and Math Workshop; Instructional Technology Tuesdays; Summer Institutes with graduate credit; Leader in Me, PLTW, and E/LA lab implementations). As PD is about educating teachers, the district does so with an eye on what staff already know and builds on that expertise to improve craft, as opposed to pouring in new content and expecting things to be instantly successful. Just as student mastery of skills occurs over many days and lessons, teachers benefit from sustained, connected PD over time. A unique aspect of BSSD PD is that all activities are subject to rigorous evaluation (e.g., exit surveys, assessment data tracking), studied critically to determine impact, and shared so best practices can spread to more staff and schools.

At different times throughout the school year and/or during their tenure as an educator, WYE teachers experience significant support, including novice teacher induction training; PD; mentoring; modeling; dedicated instructional coach and content expert time (e.g., Ellin Keene, Debbie Miller, Terri Clinefelter, Katherine Bomer, Greg Tang, Matt Glover, Tim Rasinsky); collegial collaboration, observation, and classroom practice discussion opportunities within and beyond the school (e.g., PD days, institutes, and conferences; a Federal Education Department Science School Improvement Grant; and immersion in research-oriented settings (i.e., onsite E/LA lab). Additional structures established to assure strong PD have taken root in the school as part of the regular, continuous work of teaching, including: a district evaluation system that identifies strengths and weaknesses in practice and aligns expectations with core content addressed by the Missouri Learning Standards; creation and collection of best practices and assessment resources for broad dissemination and use by teachers to maintain and improve classroom instruction; and adapting the organizational structure of the school day to support better teaching (e.g., in-district workshops, school collaboration days, Leader in Me Lighthouse sessions).

WYE staff acknowledge that time has long passed when teachers can simply walk into classrooms, close the door, and just wing it alone. They also realize that to become better at their work, observation, sharing, and coaching in authentic, job-embedded learning settings with in-house and contracted content experts must occur.

4. School Leadership:

At WYE, all K-5 students are expected to attain academically. Staff work tirelessly to provide a quality education and close gaps between typically high achieving and traditionally low-performing groups,

including ELL, special education, and Section 504 students. To address and meet learners' needs, promote shared accountability and ownership, and transform climate and culture, a Lighthouse Team leadership approach was implemented during the 2012-2013 school year.

WYE staff believe shared leadership makes it easier to mobilize commitment and put energy into actions designed to improve school practices. Just as teaming has been identified as an effective classroom strategy, it has been proven similarly beneficial for facilitating sustainable change. In addition, recent and current WYE administrators have found leadership teams to be a practical way to successfully distribute crucial tasks and responsibilities, especially those related to such areas as problem-solving; communication; PD; motivation; coaching/mentoring; keeping abreast of research-based practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and evaluating impact of outcomes.

Upon making the Lighthouse Team operational in conjunction with the Leader in Me program, which is based on "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," WYE staff have become more capable of guiding renewal and improvement efforts and with achieving the mission of providing a positive, productive, and successful school experience for all K-5 students. Also, grades 3-5 students have been empowered to find their individual talents and gifts through school leadership roles (jobs); set, track, and report upon SMART goal accomplishment; lead performance conferencing; and support each other (Peer Buddies, Triage Leaders). In this way, students are in charge of their learning, and there is no need to wait for grade cards to know the exact steps necessary to improve academically.

WYE stakeholders understand what the Lighthouse Team is doing and are fully focused upon and engaged in moving the school forward. Staff serve as leaders of the building and participate directly through a formal, structured process. Each Tuesday, there's a faculty meeting of some sort, with all staff attending on the first and second of each month. The third Tuesday is designated as Team Tuesday. On Team Tuesday, staff are broken down into three separate groups – Service Team, Instructional Team, or Leadership Team. On the fourth Tuesday, vertical teams meet to address school needs across respective grade levels and disciplines. This format allows and requires all staff to step into and master a complex array of leadership skills and roles.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

WYE stakeholders are committed to meeting the needs of the whole child. Staff believe academic success has roots in students' lives earlier than kindergarten, as they come to formal learning differing in their family/home environment; socioeconomic resources; cultural backgrounds; levels of Pre-K preparation; capabilities; experiences; intellectual and social orientations; expectations; aspirations; and personality types. These individual, contextual differences affect students in how they perceive themselves and what they see as achievable. Staff know that contrary to the popular view of education as a powerful assimilating and mediating force capable of removing child circumstance influences, the fact is they rarely disappear. Thus, the Leader in Me treat was implemented so all students, even those deemed as "at-risk," are treated exactly the same, as capable individuals, full of unlimited potential, who through skills building, accountability, grit, and the willingness to improve, can succeed.

In conjunction with the Leader in Me initiative, specific strategies are emphasized, including high expectations manifested in curriculum, climate, and practices; coherence in alignment and sequencing of content; integration of student experiences and prior knowledge; opportunities for active, collaborative discovery; frequent assessment and feedback; respect for diversity of race, ethnicity, cultures, talents, abilities, and ways of learning; emphasis on foundational skills; and the development of connections between classroom instruction and the working world. Teachers promote and develop a shared realization that high performance for everyone is the primary aim, and that it is not simply a matter of practice, integration, or coordination, but rather one of regularly and energetically communicating the same message – all K-5 students, as leaders, can experience academic success.

As incorporated within the Leader in Me program, a number of paralleled themes were identified that encourage forward-thinking and favorably impact students' chances for academic success, including the direct, conscious use of organizational influences to pursue, implement, and facilitate high performance within and outside the classroom; strongly coupled, school-wide coordination across and within all grade levels and departments; intentional relationship building and awareness of each other's efforts, practices, and work; and engagement in information gathering, measurement, assessment, and reporting of data directed toward continuous improvement. Ultimately, incorporation of reflective-practitioner and self-regarding institution methodology, in which ongoing analysis of factors promoting progress are thoroughly engrained in the way business is conducted in the classroom and school, have made it possible for all WYE stakeholders to demonstrate growth and maximize potential.