

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 [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal Ms. Robyn S. Cook

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

Official School Name Cloudcroft Middle School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 800 James Canyon Highway PO Box 198

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

City Cloudcroft State NM Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 88317-0198

County Otero County

Telephone (575) 601-4416 Fax (866) 805-6335

Web site/URL http://www.cmsbears.org E-mail robyn.cook@cmsbears.org

Twitter Handle _____ Facebook Page _____ Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____ Blog _____ Other Social Media Link _____

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

Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Travis Dempsey E-mail travis.dempsey@cmsbears.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Cloudcroft Municipal Schools Tel. (575) 601-4416

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 Mr. Bill Denney
(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):
- 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 3 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	0	0	0
1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0
3	0	0	0
4	0	0	0
5	0	0	0
6	11	10	21
7	15	15	30
8	18	18	36
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	44	43	87

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:
- 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 6 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 16 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75 % White
 - 0 % 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: 58%

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	30
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2014 until the end of the 2014-2015 school year	30
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	60
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2014	104
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.577
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	58

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %
2 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 44 %
Total number students who qualify: 38

8. Students receiving special education services: 16 %
14 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.

- 1 Autism
- 0 Deafness
- 0 Deaf-Blindness
- 1 Emotional Disturbance
- 0 Hearing Impairment
- 0 Mental Retardation
- 0 Multiple Disabilities
- 0 Orthopedic Impairment
- 3 Other Health Impaired
- 9 Specific Learning Disability
- 0 Speech or Language Impairment
- 0 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
- 0 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	1
Classroom teachers	5
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	2
Paraprofessionals	1
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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 17:1
12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2014-2015	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011
Daily student attendance	95%	96%	94%	97%	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.

By providing a safe learning environment, our students will become unique productive members of society. #1 in state in overall test scores for 3 years. The most noted, admired school district in state for cultural, environmental, and academic reasons.

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

The village of Cloudcroft is nestled in the Sacramento Mountains in Southern New Mexico. It is a close-knit community with events centering around or in the school itself. Cloudcroft Schools is considered a rural school and has the largest district, as far as area, in the entire state. Most our students travel farther to attend school than any other school in New Mexico. Cloudcroft is tied closely to the ranching, tourism, and National Forestry industry that surrounds the village.

Cloudcroft has a reputation for having amazing teachers and students. There is very little staff turnover because once a person becomes part of the school, he/she tends to not want to leave such a great school and community. Our students are supported by all staff—from the custodians, to administration, to teachers, to the cafeteria staff. We truly feel it takes a village to support our students, and everyone who works in this school is here to do what is best for kids. Not only do we know every one of our students on a personal level, but we also know their parents and extended families. Some of our teachers have taught generations of the same family. It speaks highly of Cloudcroft that people would want their children and grandchildren to be taught in the same school they were taught. Teachers and administrators take time to know the students, this has significantly decreased discipline problems in our school system. We rarely have the major discipline issues other schools deal with on a daily basis. We set extremely high expectations for our students academically and behaviorally; and they rise to the occasion each day.

Cloudcroft Middle School is following the Leader in Me program. Students are taught the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Steven Covey. They are given the opportunity to lead activities in the class, school, and community. Students lead the announcements each day, giving them experience at public speaking. We no longer have “Honor Roll Assemblies,” but instead we host “On-A-Roll Assemblies” that celebrate every students’ win. Cheerleaders lead the school in school cheers. Each class has created its own cheer for success which is judged during the spirit contest. Students lead the assembly by creating the agenda and by being the master of ceremonies. Along with the “On-A-Roll Assemblies” each nine weeks, we have a “Data Night” each semester. At “Data Night,” students participate in a student-led conference where they explain test results and share goals and strategies for success with their parents. We have found that students and parents have a greater understanding of testing and the correlation of what is happening in the classroom.

Cloudcroft Middle School begins with sixth grade participating in whole class water project for the Sudan using the book *Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park as inspiration. The students learn what it is like to be without running water in their homes. Then they come together to create projects to raise money for fresh water in the Sudan. When they are in eighth grade, they choose individual topics called “What the World Needs Now” projects. Students identify a need, create a notebook describing their journey, determine ways to raise awareness or funds for their cause, and then initiate their plan. At the end of the year, we have an Eighth Grade Reception to recognize their accomplishments and give them the opportunity to tell the community about their project.

Teachers and staff at Cloudcroft Middle School have worked tirelessly to prepare for the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), End of Course (EoC) exams and PARCC testing. They have created Scope and Sequences that align with the CCSS and NM State Standards and Benchmarks. They have created Action Plans using testing data to determine how they are going to teach whole class, small group, and individual student intervention. They have after-school tutoring for students who are struggling and use high school students as mentors. Teachers have worked to include reading interventions into the master schedule. Next year, teachers are planning on scheduling “What I Need Now” (WINN) classes opposite of the elective classes to address students with a D or F, so they can get help during the school day. The teachers have taken a hard look at the students’ needs to determine how they can adapt their teaching to reflect success for all students. Their ultimate goal is that 90% of the students will be proficient or advanced on the PARCC test in ELA and Math by the year 2018. Weekly, teachers receive a list of all students with a grade below a 70% and, either by email or phone, connect with parents to let them know which assignments are missing or if their students work is below satisfactory. Parent communication is the key to getting students on track to work to their full potential.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

Cloudcroft Middle School English/Language Arts consists of book studies, writing, daily reading of a book of student's choice, and vocabulary/grammar. Students are expected to write each day in a Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) journal. Students are expected to learn vocabulary and use it in a sentence correctly. Students are expected to correctly edit sentences, paragraphs, and whole writing samples provided by the teacher or other students. Most of all, students are expected to write daily. Students write daily in connection with a book of their choice that they are required to finish within a three week time frame. In-depth vocabulary lessons are integrated within the daily curriculum by connecting responses to current readings and books of choice readings. Vocabulary is discussed, used in writing, connected to literature, and tested on a weekly, cumulative basis. Writing is the core to the curriculum at Cloudcroft Middle School. There is always a writing project in process: from essays to poetry to narratives. When one project is completed, it is housed in a writing binder and will be revisited at some point later in the year to stress the importance of the writing process. Writing is peer and class reviewed due to the grammar and language exercises done daily in class. Lessons are connected to all disciplines of ELA.

Cloudcroft Middle School math is based on Pearson's Digits curriculum. Students are exposed to the math through the teacher in a traditional setting with various learning activities and examples. Students then proceed to the computer to do their assigned homework. The computer provides additional resources for struggling students such as video lessons, hints, and similar problem examples. For students who are excelling, the Digits on-line program provides excellent enrichment practice. We have found the computer can analyze student needs more quickly. Each assigned lesson also includes areas of weakness for individual students as well as areas of strength.

Cloudcroft Middle School science is an integrated approach through Pearson. Each year, students have units in biology, Physical Science, Earth Science, and astronomy. The curriculum spirals on the previous years' learning and then pushes the students forward. The teachers incorporate hands on projects that are unique to our demographics and allow students to view life beyond the Sacramento Mountains.

Cloudcroft Middle School history mirrors the high school with a year each of World History, US History, and NM History through Pearson. Students are expected to complete detailed projects called "probes" that they research and present to their peers, hands on modules, research projects, create political comics, and maps of their area of study each year. Teachers focus on the relationships of the past with the students' present and future, taking time to make sure to teach the importance of being a good citizen. Teachers also try to focus on coaching great study habits to prepare students for high school. Cloudcroft Middle School teachers work as a team, collaborating on lessons and setting high expectations for our students. As a middle school staff, we use different subject area Scope and Sequences to help reiterate what each subject is teaching. For instance, when history is covering the Holocaust, English/Language Arts is doing a book study on *The Boy In The Striped Pajamas*.

Cloudcroft Middle School teachers do an amazing job of integrating the different subject areas into their curriculum. Students write on informational text associated with science and history in their English/Language Arts. Students create graphs and charts in science that relate to what they are learning in math. They create political comics, poetry, and essays in science and history that are also graded on in ELA for their writing. While the content of the assignments are check in science or history. This connection and communication between teachers allows a continuum of learning instead of individualized, segregated blocks. We believe this cross-disciplinary approach is the secret to our success.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Cloudcroft Middle has physical education at each grade level everyday. The PE program is based on the Presidential Health Program, which was created in 1960 to help people of all ages and abilities improve their overall health and fitness through various physical and dietary programs. These programs are designed to

empower students to adopt and maintain an active lifestyle. Students start each PE class running for 10 minutes, tracking their steps with pedometers. Students then record their steps and heart rate. Students do sit-ups and push-ups. After their daily warm-up, students record their progress and goals in their data sheets. Milestone awards are bestowed for each mile completed. After their daily warm-up and recording, students stretch and then learn a new sport: volleyball, basketball, football, soccer, tennis, badminton, hockey, and a number of other team and individual events, throughout the year.

We believe performing arts help to develop students' cognitive, emotional, and social development. That is why Cloudcroft Middle School students have the opportunity to be in band, choir, or art. Our School has coordinated and co-coordinated many cross-curricular activities such as our district-wide Constitution Day program, Veteran's Day program, Winter program, and Spring program which continues to include school and local musicians. All of these programs helped students to see the correlation of fine arts to other subjects such as the history of our Constitution. The variety of these programs allows all students, regardless of culture or ability, to develop a sense of belonging and to become active member of their school.

Classroom learning activities have also been expanded into community experiences. All of the following activities incorporated various pieces of the fine arts, so our students have definitely been exposed to a wide variety of opportunities. This list includes Fire Prevention Week activities, Fall Festival Costume Parade, Red Ribbon Week activities, National Anthem Project, Open House (parents and community members), End of Year Concert and Honor Band. Some of these activities are annual events in the Cloudcroft Schools and Community as well. Specific units in music have helped make a connection between these classes and the other subjects.

Band is a requirement for 5th and 6th grade students. These students learn to play and care for their instruments. At the 7th and 8th grade level, students can join the high school band program and participate in both marching and concert band competitions. We have an outstanding program with over 80 musicians in the high school band from grades 7 through 12. Our band annually brings home numerous awards from New Mexico and the Southwest.

Students in their 7th and 8th grade years can opt to be a part of the high school Chorus where they compete around the state. Or, if they choose, students can take art as an elective. This class works in different modalities allowing the students to experience art on many different levels and aspects.

Cloudcroft Middle School students have a computer class each day of the week. This allows them the opportunity to learn different educational programs designed to help the students complete their work. In addition, students are provided classroom time to research, type projects, work on their math Digits homework, take Accelerated Reader independent reading practice tests, and/or access their Lexia/Reading Plus accounts. Students are also given the opportunity to check their Powerschool accounts, which allow them to take an active role in their education. Powerschool allows them to check grades, review upcoming or missing assignments, scrutinize attendance, and verify lunch account balances. Every student, teacher, administrator and board members for the Cloudcroft Schools has their own Google email account. Students are required to become familiar with the Digital Citizen program, which is a concept to help them understand exactly how to use technology appropriately by understanding the norms of proper usage and responsibility.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

All students test in the STAR assessment program every quarter. The data that we receive helps us to determine if students are/are not progressing at grade level. Those students who are not are placed into the Lexia or Reading Plus program to bring them back on track. The STAR assessment also helps the Language Arts teachers know the ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) for each student and helps them select independent reading books that will continue to develop reading abilities.

Lexia Reading Core5's and Reading Plus' system of data-driven, differentiated instruction, and embedded assessment, is a powerful tool that assist districts in accelerating and scaling their implementation of RTI

plans – efficiently and effectively. Lexia Reading Core5 and Reading Plus provides Tier I, II, and III students the “just-right” level of instructional intensity at the right time using scaffolding, branching, and targeted instruction. Students can be flexibly grouped for instruction, reporting, and tracking as well.

Personalized Learning: Lexia Reading Core5 and Reading Plus provide an adaptive and personalized learning experience which enable students at every tier of instruction to advance their reading development and permits student to work at their own pace on activities that are based on the CCSS. If a student struggles with the task, s/he is presented with a scaffolded approach to the skill. If the student continues to struggle, s/he receives skill-specific, direct instruction within the software. If necessary, teacher-led scripted lesson materials are recommended and supplied for one-on-one instruction. This personalized approach enables at-risk students to close the gap more quickly, and enables on-level and advanced students to continue progression.

Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (GRMM): Lexia Reading Core5 and Reading Plus models of personalized learning “flips” the GRRM. Using this approach, the student is provided the ability to demonstrate mastery on each skill, while only dipping down into scaffolding and instruction when needed (You Do -> We Do -> I Do). If the student continues to struggle, the teacher is notified and provided with a scripted, structured lesson for direct instruction on that skill (Lexia or Reading Plus lessons). When an activity is successfully completed, the student can automatically build upon the skill and/or extend work in the expressive domain for that skill using paper-and-pencil activities (Lexia or Reading Plus Skill Builders).

Students who score low in Math Assessments often do not have a math problem, but instead have a reading problem. We have chosen to attack reading issues through Lexia and Reading Plus.

Cloudcroft Middle School uses the technology in the Digits Math Program to help fill any gaps in the individual student’s math skills as they are working on the current CCSS.

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

Student learning with: Discovery (3 times/year), STAR Testing Math and Reading (every quarter), Reading Plus/Lexia (daily), PARCC (annually), and EoCs (annually). Discovery is a short cycle/interim, assessment of CCSS in ELA and math throughout all testable grade levels. The test progressively increases in difficulty throughout the year. STAR Testing allows us to see reading and math grade levels, as well as Lexile reading levels of our students. PARCC and EoCs are summative assessments which allow us to see student growth annually, in addition to the effectiveness of our teaching strategies and our Scope and Sequence. Reading Plus and Lexia access students daily as they are reading and working through their assignments. This data allows our teachers to pinpoint areas of weakness and intervene before a student begins to feel unsuccessful.

Discovery is the main test from which we create our action plans. Data is correlated and used to assess the class as a whole. The assessment also helps teachers to focus individuals who could benefit from small group instruction, as well as those with individual one-one-one needs. Within 24 hours of the data release, teachers dive into the data to determine instruction that was successful as well as look for any misunderstandings the students may have had. Within the action plan, teachers target new CCSS that have yet to be addressed, standards they need to review, as well as how they are going to meet the individual needs of each student.

Scores are shared with the students and each student identifies his/her area of strength and weakness. From this data, students create goals of how they are going to improve. Goals are followed by individual strategies that help them reach their goal. Parents and community members are brought in twice a year to view the student data, goals, and progress. Students lead the conferences with their parents with teachers there for student support.

We are lucky to have many high achieving students in our school. These students are challenged each day in the classroom with alternative assignments and grading rubrics that meet their individual needs. One of the advantages of being a small school is that it is easy to adjust for student individual needs, whether it be

high or low. It is also easier to get to know the students and chose an assignment or task that interests them while challenging them to a higher level.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Cloudcroft Middle School's climate and culture is truly influenced by our community. Our community still reveres teaching as a calling and one of the most dignified careers a person can go into. Parents and community members expect us to be rigorous. The community expects students be well behaved and represent Cloudcroft with dignity and southern manners. This means that our job is to instill that work ethic in all of our students and teach them to become leaders. The Leader in Me program gives us that platform. It allows us the opportunity to give students ownership in the school and daily opportunities to lead. These opportunities present themselves in the choices that our students make. We simply remind them of the seven habits and then let them choose, giving them the opportunity to find the error of a negative situation. We simply let the student body know of a problem and give them options of what will happen next time. Students tend to find their voice if the situation reoccurs and stop it; or, the students chose not to repeat the offense for the good of the whole.

Cloudcroft Middle School is unique in that students are able to just be kids in their free time. Being isolated from a larger society has allowed students more time to mature. Students are permitted to have locks on their lockers, but choose not to use them. Students often leave personal items around the school without fear of it being stolen or vandalized. The environment allows students to be children without fear of ostracism.

The teaching staff at Cloudcroft Middle School has always had a team culture. Every teacher has a voice in the decisions and contributes to the success by working towards a common goal. This can be as simple as finding ways to support struggling students or challenging gifted students to create a complex event for the community.

Students also create a team culture. When a new student arrives, he/she is welcomed and is not seen wandering the halls alone. Within the classrooms, students who are having a difficult time can usually find a peer who will help, emotionally or academically. Our students want to see each other succeed. They cheer when Super Improver stickers are awarded and when a student tests out of an intervention class; they display honest disappointment when a peer is not meeting realistic expectations.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Cloudcroft Municipal Schools is the central hub for our community. We have events at the school in which the community can be involved. We are lucky to have active parents and community volunteers. They mentor and tutor students as well as provide support for the teachers. Our Student Information System is available to all parents offering a wide variety of information. We have informative, weekly emails of upcoming events called "Bear Growls" for both parents and community members. We have a webpage and Facebook page for those parents and community members who prefer social media.

Cloudcroft Middle School's policy is that teachers reach out to the parents of struggling and/or excelling students via email or phone.

We host a Data Night each semester. At Data Night, students participate in a student-led conference where they explain test results and share goals and strategies for success with their parents. We have found that students and parents have a greater understanding of testing and the correlation of what is happening in the classroom. In the fall, we also host a Fall Festival near Halloween. This night provides a safe place for students to celebrate Halloween along with activities for families. This has become a tradition that people from all over the area travel to, some who do not have children. Our major event in the Spring is the 8th Grade Reception. We celebrate the accomplishments of these students with the entire community, as well as recognizing the milestone of transitioning into high school.

Cloudcroft Middle School begins with sixth grade participating in whole class water project for the Sudan

using the book *Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park as inspiration. The students learn what it is like to be without running water in their homes. They carry a gallon of water each day --from class to class--to simulate how students in the Sudan feel. Then they come together to create projects to raise money for fresh water in the Sudan. When they are in eighth grade, they choose individual projects called "What the World Needs Now". Students identify a need, create a notebook describing their journey, determine ways to raise awareness or funds for their cause, and then initiate their plan. At the end of the year, we have an Eighth Grade Reception to recognize their accomplishments at the middle school and give them the opportunity to tell the community about their projects.

3. Professional Development:

Professional Development for the last three years has been focused on Common Core State Standards and the implementation of PARCC. Our concentration has been on developing skills in writing through Step Up to Writing in both Language Arts and Math. As the technological age is upon us, we are also determined to provide teachers the needed assistance in utilizing the technology. Our goal is to have the technology work for them, not against them. The philosophy behind this goal will then filter down to students through the creation of projects that could be shared with students who live miles apart from one another. A lot of the learning has been messy and often difficult. However, since the teachers have a deep understanding of CCSS and how to teach to the rigor of PARCC, they have created systems that are successful and can be recreated.

The teachers have used weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLC) as a time to address technological weakness in the staff. We have trained on Google Docs, Google Classroom, Google Forms, Google Mail, and Google Drive. We have changed from a school where the technology once worked against us to a community that technology is working for us. We have found ways to reach students through the technology and empower them to use the tools through modeling. We have also had training on Mimio SmartBoard and Mimio Vote and have incorporated this technology into our weekly lessons.

Teachers are encouraged to attend EoC building framework meetings, STEM conferences, Response to Intervention (RtI) conferences and any conference that can expand a teacher's content knowledge. Administration believes that knowledge is power. The more knowledge and power that the teachers have in their academic toolboxes will be demonstrated through the success of their students.

Cloudcroft is a land-locked community completely surrounded by National Forest. It is hard to believe but many students do not travel beyond the surrounding counties. Our classes are an opportunity to broaden a student's horizon. This can only be done through technology and the knowledge of the teacher.

4. School Leadership:

The philosophy of the school leadership is that of servant. The administration shares with the teachers the problems and tasks at hand. Teachers derive the solution, and administration has the task of supporting them to success, either through monies, time, and/or working to assist in completing the project. As an administrative team, we believe in empowering our teachers and our students by using their ideas to improve our school and its climate. Cloudcroft Middle School has grown because of the team approach; no one person is responsible for our successes or failures.

Staff and administration have worked diligently to create systems that support our teachers and students. It has been difficult and messy work to create Scope and Sequences that align not only to CCSS, but also addresses summative testing requirements in PARCC and EoCs. Teachers have created Action Plans that address the whole class, the small group, and the individual student needs. Presently, the teachers are preparing for next year by creating Interim Assessments for each nine weeks which will allow them to "backwards plan" their lessons while assessing how and what students are learning. They are choosing a path to challenge themselves when the rest of the state is moving away from interim assessments. The teachers are leaders in school reform and are constantly modeling leadership qualities to their students.

Cloudcroft Middle School is following the Leader in Me program. Students are taught the Seven Habits of

Highly Effective People by Steven Covey. Students are given the opportunity to lead activities in the classroom, the school, and our community. Students lead the announcements each day, giving them experience at public speaking. We no longer have Honor Roll Assemblies, but instead we host “On-A-Roll Assemblies” that celebrate every students’ win. Cheerleaders lead the school in class cheers. Each class has created its own cheer for success which is then judged during the spirit competition. Students lead the assembly by creating the agenda and by being the master of ceremonies. Along with the “On-A-Roll Assemblies” each nine weeks, we have a Data Night each semester. At Data Night, students participate in a student-led conference where they explain their test results and share their goals and strategies for success with their parents or guardians. We have found that students and parents have a greater understanding of testing and the correlation of what is happening in the classroom.

Part VI – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Cloudcroft Middle School is following the Leader in Me program. Students are taught the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People by Steven Covey. They are given the opportunity to lead activities in the class, school, and community. Students lead the announcements each day, giving them experience at public speaking. We no longer have Honor Roll Assemblies, but instead we host “On-A-Roll Assemblies” that celebrate every student’s win. Cheerleaders lead the school in school cheers. Each class has created its own cheer for success which is judged during the spirit contest. Students lead the assembly by creating the agenda and by being the master of ceremonies. Along with the “On-A-Roll Assemblies” each nine weeks, we have a Data Night each semester. At Data Night, students participate in a student-led conference where they explain their test results and share their goals and strategies for success with their parents. We have found that students and parents have a greater understanding of testing and the correlation of what is happening in the classroom.

We believe that all students can be leaders and that they have particular, unique strengths that they can use to be successful. We believe that it is our job to recognize their strengths, and at the same time, turn their weaknesses into strengths. By doing these two things simultaneously while we are giving the students opportunities to lead, thus, we are creating students who are productive members of society. With the rigor of the curriculum we are teaching, students a work ethic and perseverance by not allowing them the opportunity to opt out or take the easy road to failure. Through the data, we are showing them the correlation of what they are doing in the classroom to the test, as well as what they will need to accomplish as high school students and beyond. Through the Leader in Me program we are teaching students to become proactive. This, in turn, lets us know how they learn and what has worked to meet their individual needs. Students have found success in owning their learning and their behavior. The grades have steadily improved and discipline referrals have decreased. Students and teachers alike have thrived in this positive culture, by working to support each other.