

U.S. Department of Education
2020 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. Tanya L. Clark
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name John S. Jones Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 301 Lumley Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Rainbow City State AL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 35906-9014

County Etowah County

Telephone (256) 442-2900 Fax (256) 442-5060

Web site/URL https://jsj.ecboe.org E-mail tanya_clark@ecboe.org

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. Alan Cosby E-mail alan_cosby@ecboe.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Etowah County Tel. (256) 549-7560

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. Tim Womack
(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. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. 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.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
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 (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
 Suburban
 Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	65	61	126
1	79	54	133
2	58	56	114
3	65	64	129
4	50	59	109
5	65	48	113
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	382	342	724

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 4 % Asian
 - 13 % Black or African American
 - 5 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 75 % White
 - 3 % 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 2018 - 2019 school year: 6%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

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, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	31
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	43
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	694
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
Arabic, Vietnamese, French, Ewe, Nepali, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Gujarati, Farsi

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 3 %
19 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 48 %

Total number students who qualify: 347

8. Students receiving special education services: 11 %

80 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>14</u> Autism | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>14</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>10</u> Developmental Delay | <u>20</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>12</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>5</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>2</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 11

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	2
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	39
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	7
Student support personnel e.g., school 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 19:1

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

Required Information	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

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. 2001

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

The mission of John S. Jones Elementary School is to develop competent, respectful, and resourceful students who pursue life-long learning. Our mantra is "We have not taught until all of our students have learned".

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

John S. Jones Elementary School (JSJ), a National Blue Ribbon School, is located in northeast Alabama in the small town of Rainbow City. It is the largest of eleven elementary schools in the Etowah County School District serving approximately 734 students in grades K-5. Our faculty is led by two dedicated administrators with 47 highly skilled, certified teachers who serve the instructional needs of every child, aided by 31 classified employees. JSJ has 39 self-contained classrooms, three of which are self-contained special needs classrooms. JSJ has three National Board Certified Teachers and two candidates currently applying for certification.

JSJ serves a diverse student population with over 11 different languages spoken by our families. This diversity provides opportunities for students to experience different cultures. Additionally, 11% of our students have qualified to receive special education services. JSJ houses approximately 40 students with multiple and profound exceptionalities from around Etowah County who thrive in a self-contained classroom setting. Instruction for these students is provided by highly qualified teachers that provide specially designed academic and behavioral instruction to meet each student's individualized goals.

Out of our 734 students, 48% qualify for free or reduced-priced meals. Stakeholders and other community officials are invested in the social, emotional, and physical well-being of our students and partner with our faculty to meet the needs of our families. Throughout the school year, the Quality of Life mobile medical unit provides dental screenings, new glasses, or mental health counseling to children in need. Local churches provide food donations to our brown bag buddy program to help feed disadvantaged students. Partnerships with local agencies such as the CED Mental Health Center are vital in educating the whole child and allow us to maintain and strengthen relationships with families. Parent and community volunteers serve as an integral part of our school program.

We believe that each student is unique and deserves a safe and secure environment. Our goal is to create a positive school climate that fosters kindness, mutual respect, and positive relationships. Students caught doing a random act of kindness can earn kindness coins for their grade. Our recent trip to a local soup kitchen to serve lunch demonstrates to our students that they are a part of something beyond our school community.

Our dedicated staff strives to enhance learning through a variety of strategies that optimize student engagement. It is commonplace to see students working collaboratively using strategies such as active inquiry, reciprocal teaching, and peer partners to enhance project-based and real-world activities. During this time, teachers provide differentiated, tiered instruction to targeted small groups of students. Our attention to state standards and student success is data-driven and prescriptive to increase academic achievement. As a faculty, we strive to remain at the top in all educational endeavors. In order to ensure our students have quality instruction delivered through best practice techniques, ongoing professional development is of extreme importance. A walk through the hallways at JSJ will prove that students and learning are the top priority of this school.

JSJ is a fully equipped twenty-first century school that strives to implement innovative programs to engage students and improve student learning. One such program is our makerspace, which provides students with authentic learning experiences to solve problems, create, collaborate, discover, think critically, and persevere using hands-on design and construction. Our robotics program is an extension of our makerspace which offers students the opportunity to learn how science, engineering, math, and technology work together and interact. Our Google Expeditions Lab is an immersive education technology that allows teachers and students to explore the world through virtual reality and augmented reality. As a result of these learning experiences, students consistently receive high scores on state assessments and are prepared to succeed in a twenty-first century world.

JSJ received the National Blue Ribbon School Award in 2000-2001. This distinguished award is referenced by city officials to draw businesses to our area, and we proudly display the Blue Ribbon Award in our school entrance. This award inspired our esteemed faculty to become leaders and share with other schools in

our area. Our school is a model school, and we have many visitors to our beautiful campus throughout the year. Our school has consistently increased our scores in accountability results for the state. JSJ was selected in August of 2019 by Governor Kay Ivey to represent Alabama as an Official Bicentennial School.

The mindset of our administration, faculty, and stakeholders continues to be one of excellence for our school. JSJ has received an “A” on the Alabama School Report Card since the report card first began in December, 2016. JSJ is a high-performing, quality school that is valued by the faculty, staff, parents, and other stakeholders throughout the community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

At JSJ, the mantra that guides our professional practice is “We have not taught until every student has learned.” As a faculty we strive to perfect our practice by staying on the cutting edge of emerging research and professional development. Our staff meets routinely to review data and adjust instruction based on student need. Data from summative assessments and Scantron Analytics provide an overall look at grade level standards. From this data, we determine school wide areas of focus for long-term goals and the continuous improvement plan. Professional learning communities, onsite professional development, and grade level meetings are then developed around these needs to reflect and adjust instruction as needed.

Short-term goals are determined by formative assessments such as weekly tests, teacher observation, student engagement, and prescriptive data from student adaptive computer programs. This data drives our small group and tiered instruction. Targeted skills are addressed through explicit and scaffolded instruction, and groups change as skills are mastered. Identified non-proficient students are provided with targeted instruction through research-based intervention programs and are monitored closely for growth through collaborative conversations, data meetings, and the Response to Instruction (RtI) process.

Active learning is an essential part of the learning process at JSJ. Student engagement is evidenced through teacher facilitated lessons, collaborative groupings, peer conversations and multi-sensory activities. Tracks of student learning are exhibited throughout the school by anchor charts and student created projects. Technology is an important teaching tool that influences all areas of education and is an integral part of lesson planning at JSJ. It is intended to enhance instruction rather than replace it. It allows our teachers to extend learning experiences through unlimited resources and provides students with multiple ways to obtain information.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Working closely with the Alabama Reading Initiative for the past 18 years has instilled in our faculty the importance of research-based reading instruction that is not only data driven, but also student centered. We believe that reading is an active process that involves not just reading, but also writing, conversation, investigation, and deeper levels of thinking. Evidence of student thinking is displayed throughout our building in forms of anchor charts, graphic organizers, posters, projects, and creative writing.

Providing students with explicit strategy instruction is essential. Therefore, creative ways to support comprehension instruction are integrated throughout each grade level. For example, by collaborating in groups, first grade students practiced making inferences while playing an escape room game. Additionally, third grade students gained a deeper understanding of text structure with a genre study in which they rotated among teachers and dressed as their favorite genre to culminate the unit with a parade. Likewise, fifth grade students practiced word work through a root word surgery center.

Data meetings are held routinely to adjust instruction as needed across the school, in the classroom, and among individual students. Our instruction follows the tiered model and is aimed at closing the achievement gap as quickly as possible. For example, our intervention team pushes into kindergarten classrooms to serve small groups of students identified by summative assessments, such as DIBELS, within the first few weeks of school. What makes this practice successful is that these groups are fluid, and change as other students are identified through formative assessments such as teacher observation, portfolio checks, and progress monitoring. This process allows us to be proactive instead of reactive and gives the opportunity to distinguish between those that may have a true learning deficiency as opposed to those that have had limited academic exposure.

Our phonics instruction is multi-sensory and is geared to incorporate the whole brain. We believe that best

practices gleaned from approaches such as Orton-Gillingham, are necessary for meeting the learning styles of all students. Our standards-based curriculum provides a scope and sequence that is implemented through explicit instruction and the gradual release model. Phonics lessons incorporate practice in phonemic awareness, word building, dictation, and repeated readings with decodable texts. Students are assessed weekly with lesson checkpoints to ensure mastery and adjust tier two instruction. Success is celebrated and skills are reinforced with activities such as glow centers where students build words using glow sticks and read sentences that are highlighted to glow in the dark.

Since reading is the foundation upon which most other subjects are built, we believe students must understand connections across the curriculum. Literacy stations often revolve around activities based on science and social studies themes, while leveled science and social studies readers are tools used at the small group table for strategy work. These activities are often turned into presentation opportunities through the use of technology and a variety of software applications. Student-created projects such as these provide teachers with an overall picture of the whole language arts process.

1c. Mathematics

John S. Jones Elementary follows the Alabama Course of Study for mathematics. Our goal is to deliver higher order instructional strategies aligned with the College and Career Ready Standards that will challenge learners to develop problem solving and decision making skills. Our Go Math program offers strategies that promote differentiated learning through explicit instructional practices. Teachers are equipped with a variety of manipulatives and utilize outside resources to increase rigor and reinforce learning outcomes.

Our teachers encourage high standards and expectations for learning and academic achievement. Technology is a tool that is utilized throughout math instruction to problem solve and create activities with real world connections designed to further improve comprehension of strategies and skills. Content standard based programs, such as IXL, provide opportunities for individualized instruction to develop and support academic growth and success. Programs such as XtraMath and Gimkit are used to assist students in mastering math facts.

Peer helpers are a beneficial approach to encourage and assist each other throughout the application of learning center activities. Cumulative and spiral math meeting boards are developed and implemented daily to check students' comprehension and retention of standards. Students are taught to be problem-solvers. Open House and Math Madness nights at JSJ offer families opportunities and activities that encourage and strengthen math awareness and knowledge through application exercises. During Math Madness night, parents can see how fun math can be by playing games with their children to help them learn crucial mathematical concepts. At Open House, parents and students make math games to take home and learn about websites students can access to help with math skills.

Our school uses a variety of mathematical instructional approaches that are formulated to prepare students with the utmost educational success. Small group instruction is provided daily for students that are having difficulties mastering a skill. After the whole group lesson, the teacher will monitor student performance to determine which students need additional instruction. Lessons at the small group table are differentiated to explicitly meet student needs. These fluid groups change daily to provide support to those students in need.

Teachers formulate math instructional needs and additional support based on data and student academic needs. The results are derived from performances from Scantron Performance Series Express and standardized testing. Students are assessed through formal and informal assessments. Exit slips are a quick and valuable way to check students' comprehension through the application of content standards. Each year, students participate in a Glow Day full of Math centered games and tasks. Teachers develop their Glow Day activities based on student academic needs and additional support. This is a motivational day that promotes fun educational learning. Assessments from chapter checkpoints also offer a way to ascertain data needed to guide instruction. Data meetings offer collaboration with colleagues and give teachers the opportunity to determine analytics for furthering instructional needs for all learners.

1d. Science

Our science program is designed to launch students on a life-long adventure of discovery. Based on standards from the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS) for Science, the major focus of our program is to provide experiences that will help our students become intelligent decision-makers with a firm foundation in science and engineering. The curriculum includes technology, engineering, earth, life, and physical sciences.

Hands-on tasks and project-based learning play a big role in our science curriculum. While studying the life cycle, classes use incubators to hatch chicken eggs. Several grades have a “Mad Scientist Day” to perform investigations using different variables throughout the day. Students utilize science journals that include student drawings and nonfiction text features, such as charts and graphs, to aid in problem-based learning. The journals allow successful inclusion of all students into the regular science class.

Students use IXL Science and other internet resources to conduct research and reinforce skills. Technology enhanced items like Google slide presentations are created by students on topics such as the ecosystems. Labs performed in the classroom are assessed observing the scientific method. Science activities are often held outdoors. For example, to show the movement of the sun throughout the day, the students make chalk drawings of shadows on the sidewalks. They also use yarn to model the distance of the planets from the sun.

Students participate in numerous activities to broaden their passion for science. They visit sites such as: McWane Center, Birmingham Zoo, Tennessee Aquarium, and U.S. Space & Rocket Center. Community partners such as Alabama Power and Schneider Electric provide innovative programs to our students. This year, Schneider Electric donated solar powered model cars to fourth grade classes to be assembled and raced during Energy Awareness Week.

1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

John S. Jones Elementary follows the Alabama Course of Study for social studies. Goals within the curriculum include literacy in the areas of history, economics, geography, and politics. Students have the opportunity to achieve these goals through technology, literature, models, and service. General and special education teachers collaborate to make sure all students’ needs are met.

Students are provided with engaging learning activities that are developmentally appropriate. Third grade’s participation in Christmas Around the World optimizes exploration of holidays within other cultures. Students are given a passport for entrance into each country they visit. This learning activity provides ELL students with opportunities to share traditions from their native country. Writing journals and graphic organizers offer a chance for reflection. Students in fourth grade study Alabama history and the culture surrounding the environment in which they live. Last year, students participated in Alabama’s Bicentennial Celebration through implementing a recycling program that spread throughout the community and has led us to be chosen as a Bicentennial School. Fifth grade’s participation in Liberty’s Legacy helps students to recognize characteristics of super citizens. Students demonstrate super citizen skills through their participation in the Constitution Day program, D.A.R.E, and their involvement in community service activities. These activities include donating to our members of the armed services through the Treats for Troops program at our school.

Lesson plans are designed around events that occur within the community, the state, nationally, and worldwide. Incorporating map skills allows students to know where in the world these events occur. Scholastic News and Social Studies Weekly Reader assists students in making connections to real world events through applying skills related to mock elections and census polls. Through the use of Chromebooks, students are able to share their personal views with students outside their classroom communities.

1f. For secondary schools:

1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

1. Arts

Our school values the arts to encourage creativity, build self-esteem, and promote academic growth. Through incorporating musicality in all subject areas, students are able to build upon skills, strategies, and concepts.

The Joyful Juniors, our chorale group, performs at school and community events. Local school ensembles demonstrate their passion for music through concerts for our student body. Our fifth graders have the opportunity to participate on campus through their engagement in a strings program through the Etowah Youth Symphony Orchestra. We promote student involvement in local theater groups. Additionally, each grade performs a musical program once a year for parents and students to enjoy.

We encourage the use of drama, creative writing, and visual arts in classroom instruction. Teachers use dramatic arts such as Readers' Theater, historical reenactments, and role-playing in the classroom to enhance instruction. Utilization of technology such as graphic design, Movie Maker, and Puppet Pals provide a connection with the visual arts. Each month, the education coordinator from the local art museum teaches art to students. Student artwork is displayed in the museum for public viewing.

2. Physical Education/Health/Nutrition

In our physical education classes, we incorporate creative games, relays, and activities that meet the Alabama Course of Study Standards. Our goal is to create a fun, positive environment that improves fitness levels and coordination, teaches teamwork and sportsmanship, and inspires a love for physical activity. We promote wellness through encouraging students to maintain a healthy lifestyle of movement and well balanced nutrition.

We have a state-of-the-art playground that targets muscular and cardiovascular endurance. Being creative, incorporating technology, and including music and dance, all help create an environment that students enjoy. Sportsmanship and character are vital ingredients of our program, and we emphasize these qualities in all our lessons.

3. Foreign Language(s):

4. Technology/Library/Media

The media center is located in the center of the building and is often referred to as the "heart of the school." It functions as the information center to assist students in becoming effective users of information, to promote a love of reading, and to encourage the development of twenty-first century learners. The collection contains over 10,000 books as well as magazines, videos, and other reference materials. The media center contains computer workstations, QR corner, STEAM lab, and makerspace area which allow students to research, explore, and create.

Every JSJ classroom is equipped with an interactive white board, projector, and document camera. Students in second through fifth grade are supplied with Chromebooks and provided access to Google Classroom. Learners use digital tools to conduct research, solve problems, and create original works through independent and collaborative usage. Students beginning in kindergarten are exposed to coding through the use of Beebots, later transitioning to Ozobots and Spheros. Through our VEX Robotics club, students in third through fifth grades have the opportunity to be innovative thinkers and problem solvers, and to apply these skills during robotics competitions. Kindergarten classes are equipped with multiple Kindle Fires and iPads that students use daily with educational apps and programs. Students are able to utilize virtual reality devices through the use of Google Expeditions.

5. Any other curriculum programs, such as character building or career/life-skills

Students at JSJ participate in Integrity Time, a monthly research based character development program. Kindergarten through third grade receive Integrity Time lessons weekly from the school counselor and volunteers from our community. Fourth and fifth grade students are taught about resilience and how to apply resilience in their everyday lives through hands-on lessons. Small group lessons are also formed to help meet more specific needs of students in the building. These groups include the “Banana Split” for students struggling with divorce, the “Charlie Brown” group for students grieving the loss of a loved one, and a “Friendship Group” to help students create friendships. Fifth grade students also participate in a career fair. Each career fair hosts around twenty-five professionals with varying degrees and job descriptions. Students are able to visit with professionals and ask questions creating the opportunity to start thinking about career choices for the future. The school counselor also partners with outside community agencies to provide tutors and extra academic support for students that are struggling in reading or math.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

We collect data across multiple platforms to quickly identify students who are performing below grade level. Summative assessments such as Scantron, DIBELS, and STAR give us an overall view of student achievement. However, to identify specific gaps in instruction, teachers rely on formative assessments such as observation, portfolio checks, weekly assessments, and progress monitoring. Prescriptive instruction is then delivered through our tiered model.

When grade level standards have not been mastered, small group, skills-based lessons are presented by the classroom teacher. These explicit lessons provide guidance, feedback, and scaffolding to ensure student success. Tier two groups may change weekly or daily, as determined by formative assessments. If below grade-level standards are not mastered, students are placed in research-based programs delivered by our intervention specialists. Progress monitoring is a vital part of this process. Tier two students are progress monitored bi-weekly through DIBELS and STAR, while tier three students are monitored weekly. Grade-level and RtI meetings are held routinely with administration to review data and discuss individual student progress. We make it a priority to know who these students are to ensure their needs are not going unnoticed.

In addition to interventionists, we have volunteers that are a welcome part of our school community. They give freely of their time to assist with tasks such as letter naming, math fact practice, fluency practice, and more. The friendships made through these partnerships provide students not only academic support but emotional support as well.

Motivation and celebrations are important at JSJ, and we strive to recognize all areas of academic excellence. For example, last year before taking our benchmark test in the spring, students set goals for growth. A variety of prizes, from large to small, were donated by area merchants. Two of our students scoring in the bottom quadrants won bicycles for making great gains. We look for inclusive ways to celebrate success and encourage students to always do their best!

3b. Students performing above grade level

In an effort to raise the achievement level for all students, teachers are encouraged to teach to the level of the high performing students in their whole group lessons. Teachers can then use classwork and small group lessons to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students. In meeting the needs for those students performing above grade level, teachers use a multitude of resources. Teachers have literature and texts available in higher levels and allow students to participate in lit circles. We utilize many web-based programs that are leveled including those such as Lexia Core 5 that extend learning even after a student has completed the elementary level curriculum. Skills in IXL Math can go above a student's grade level, and Khan Academy lessons are utilized for students that work ahead in math. Students in all grades use programs such as Pebble Go and Brain Pop to research topics and create presentations. Students participate

in project-based learning to develop problem solving and higher order thinking skills. In fifth grade, students work collaboratively in groups to design a contraption that will keep an egg from breaking when it is dropped from the roof of the school. Higher level students can serve as peer tutors and are allowed to “teach” a concept to the class on occasion. Kindergarten students can be traveling readers where they are allowed to travel to read to the principal or to other school employees.

We also partner with the Etowah County Gifted Center to provide gifted screening for all second grade students. Those students who qualify for gifted services are transported one day each week to receive specialized instruction at the Gifted Center. Students at JSJ are also given the opportunity to participate in enrichment opportunities such as Robotics, Math Bee, and the Technology Fair.

3c. Special education

In an effort to better set students up for success, and to close the achievement gap within our school, we provide support and interventions tailored to our students with special needs. Before students begin the academic year, the special education staff collaborates with general education teachers to provide methods and accommodations for effective differentiated instruction for our shared students. Our focus is to build strong relationships with our students as a basis for respectable learning done through trust, love, and a safe place. Through this relationship, teachers are able to find the motivating factors for each student that will also help to tailor individual interventions.

During the writing of new Individual Education Plans (IEPs), many third through fifth grade students are involved in the writing process and progress review in order to promote students’ ownership of learning. This is accomplished through videos created prior to the IEP meeting and are shared with parents. We seek to create valuable partnerships with parents.

The special education staff uses intensive, research-proven reading intervention programs such as Lexia, SPIRE, and Sounds Sensible to help close the reading achievement gap. Tailored instruction is provided through individual folders in which students are able to work on individual goals outlined in each IEP. To effectively gauge our students’ ability, staff provide assessments with accommodations such as accessibility features on computers, reduced choices, extra time, quiet space, and one-to-one testing. We analyze data and assessments frequently in order to make sure our instruction is tailored to the students. Community collaboration is frequently used through outside agencies such as mental health counselors and behavior analysts in order to provide more intensive interventions and support. We strongly believe in our students and want to enable them to reach their unique potential.

3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered

At John S. Jones Elementary, there is an emphasis on educating each child as an individual. Nowhere is this more evident than in the English as a Second Language department. There is at least one classroom teacher in every grade level who holds a master’s degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. In addition to these highly qualified classroom teachers, JSJ is served by one ESL teacher who provides support to the teachers and students through either pull out or push in lessons based on the needs of each student. Our school has a diverse population of English Language Learners. There are currently twenty-three students who speak eleven different languages. Of these twenty-three students, there are eight newcomers who have been in the United States for less than a year. When a newcomer enrolls at JSJ, they are given at least nine weeks of heavily sheltered instruction in which the student begins to learn the language of school and acclimate to its culture. Classroom teachers coordinate with the ESL teacher to provide appropriate accommodations that ensure the most comprehensible input is provided to the student. As the student’s language development progresses, scaffolds are removed from the instructional program until the student is operating as independently as his or her peers.

Throughout a multilingual child’s time at JSJ, teachers encourage the student to share elements of the student’s home culture with classmates. A couple of years ago, our ELL students wrote and published books about their experiences that were put on display at the public library. Also, when Nepal was hit by a major earthquake, our Nepali students collaborated with school leaders to do a fundraiser called “Nickels for

Nepal." This intercultural exchange makes JSJ a more well rounded, diverse environment that serves the needs of all its students.

3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered

Our school is the home of the majority of the students with low incidence exceptionalities throughout our county. We have 36 students with a range of exceptionalities. We use a variety of strategies and hands-on activities to help students acquire the skills needed to meet the Alabama Alternate Standards. We also use programs such as Unique Learning Systems Program to give students with complex learning needs access to standards-based learning.

Many of our students have communication deficits and are encouraged to use the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs) to communicate their wants and needs with others in order to promote social and emotional independence. Students are provided opportunities to practice these skills through real-life experiences. During a recent field trip to McDonalds, students applied these skills by ordering their meal. This was a new experience for several of our special needs children.

We also have a coffee cart operated by our special friends called Mugs with a Hug. Each Friday, teachers are able to order coffee that is prepared and delivered to them by students from our self contained unit. Through the coffee cart, our students work on a variety of life skills such as sequencing, following directions, appropriate communication, money skills, and more. Our students participate in various events such as Special Olympics to support them academically and functionally.

Through a grant from Alabama Power, we were able to create a new sensory room for our students. Students with sensory needs are able to use this room to self regulate their behaviors and refocus for the school day. Our sensory room provides a range of different stimuli to encourage sensory exploration. This room is a safe place for all students to explore their senses and feel calm and supported, which often enables them to return to class more focused on academics.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

JSJ establishes a positive environment that engages and motivates students and supports academic, social, and emotional growth. Our engaging climate is evident as students arrive at school because they are immediately greeted by our friendly staff and student-led safety patrol. We play upbeat music as students walk inside, while teachers greet them at the classroom door in a variety of student-friendly ways. Students feel a sense of belonging as we celebrate their successes, big and small. Schoolwide, we encourage good behavior by sending two well-behaved students from each class to a dance party in the library every Friday. Our monthly award assemblies motivate students by recognizing Accelerated Reader success, good classroom choices, respectful behavior on the bus, and a variety of academic accomplishments. JSJ recognizes achievement in the Lexia program by announcing students' names over the intercom as we play "Celebrate" by Kool and the Gang. Our "Tardy Tater" program uses Mr. & Mrs. Potato Head to promote good attendance, with classes earning potato head pieces each day they have perfect attendance.

We believe relationships promote social, emotional, and academic growth. We invite middle school students to mentor our students who need extra emotional or academic support. Mentors read with our students each week and provide monthly STEAM activities for our first graders. Our own students who are overcoming personal challenges are Peer Helpers to other students who face similar struggles. Another way we support our students is through contracted mental health counselors who come in on a weekly basis to help meet the social/emotional needs of our students. These partnerships benefit all students involved.

We believe learning can be fun! Students and faculty dress up for a vocabulary parade to share challenging words with others. Teachers promote student engagement as they utilize cooperative learning, hands on activities, centers, games, and musical brain breaks in our instructional day. Our tech-savvy teachers help us utilize the latest exciting technology in instruction. We have Skyped with astronauts and taken virtual reality field trips to faraway places. We emphasize project-based learning and offer a fifth grade classroom that is especially dedicated to that philosophy. Students maintain a school garden that grows flowers and herbs to share with our school community. In addition to science content, the garden serves as a springboard for reading, writing, and math growth. We implement lessons for all learning styles, and our staff enthusiasm encourages student engagement as well as excitement.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

JSJ is committed to engaging our families and community. We believe that informed, involved parents enhance student success. We begin school by inviting families to a Back to School Orientation that prepares students for the new year. At Open House, we showcase ideas, websites, and learning games that equip parents to help students at home. Our monthly PTSO meetings include student-led programs and special events such as our Bingo for Books. It is a popular night where participants compete to win books to take home. We want students to continue learning in the summer, so we offer "Tools for Success," to train parents to help their children succeed academically and receive free school supplies, including dry erase markers, page protectors, and math facts practice sheets. We hold Title I parent meetings, and we prioritize communication with parents through school websites, Remind, Class Dojo, and newsletters. Teachers are readily available to communicate with parents through phone calls, notes, conferences, and email.

Parent volunteers are an integral part of school life at JSJ and can be seen making copies, helping with clerical duties for teachers, or coming to be a lunch buddy for many of our students. We love our parent volunteers and want them to always feel welcome and appreciated for the countless hours they invest in our students at JSJ.

Another valued community resource is our relationship with our local Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department comes twice a year to speak with our students during our Red Ribbon Week and also at our career fair. They will fly in their helicopter and bring their mounted patrol and armored vehicles. They talk with the students about all of their equipment and how they use these tools to keep our community safe.

They also donate school supplies and provide gifts for needy families during the holidays.

JSJ involves students and families in serving and helping our community. We collect blankets and food for an animal shelter. Every Thanksgiving, we have a “Wacky Day” and encourage students to bring in non-perishable food items for our local food bank. This year, we partnered with a local soup kitchen. We reached out to them to provide help, including decorating placemats, making colorful and uplifting cards, and gathering food. Students assisted in preparing and serving a meal to the people at the shelter. Our students were touched and humbled that they were able to have an impact on so many lives that day.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Our dedicated faculty is a significant factor in JSJ’s successes. Administrators empower teachers with freedom of choice when possible and express appreciation for their hard work. Our school also values communication between administrators and teachers, and we welcome teachers’ ideas for improving our school. We hold regular faculty meetings and data meetings where we freely communicate with one another. A suggestion box is available to faculty and staff for those reluctant to share ideas.

This past year, many of our faculty and staff were able to attend professional development at the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta. All teachers, along with many support staff, participated in a book study of his book, *The Essential 55*. The study, and especially the visits, greatly inspired our teachers. Participants provided turn-around training to the rest of the faculty to help increase academic rigor, encourage respect among students, and use music to make our school even more inviting. Teachers collaborated to compile a list of 20 essential practices that will help students in every aspect of their lives, including using appropriate manners, making eye contact when someone is speaking, and responding to adults with “yes, ma’am/sir.”

Our teachers recognized a need to strengthen phonics instruction, and several teachers attended training through Orton-Gillingham. These teachers returned to school eager to share their knowledge. Our instructional coaches lead data meetings so we can make informed instructional decisions for students. Our administrators and coaches value classroom teachers’ suggestions for students because the classroom teacher best knows students’ strengths and weaknesses.

We strongly believe in supporting new teachers, so we have organized a teacher mentoring program. Each new teacher has the support of administration and instructional coaches, but they also have one grade-level teacher who is available for extra assistance. We want teachers to respect and enjoy one another, so we create a culture of support and a love for teaching.

Our teachers work hard, and we want them to feel appreciated by administration, parents, the community, and one another. To help build rapport among teachers, we plan bonding activities such as a team Scavenger Hunt. We recruit local businesses to send gift certificates and prizes to award at faculty meetings. Local churches provide meals, encouraging notes, and small gifts to teachers, as well. At data and faculty meetings, administration often provides snacks and treats to boost morale. When our teachers feel valued and supported, they are better able to help students flourish.

4. School Leadership:

Our leadership philosophy promotes the belief that leaders should be developed in many different capacities and that teacher leaders and student leaders strengthen our school community. Leaders work together to accomplish goals that revolve around student achievement and success for the whole child. The administrators ensure that policies are in place that remove barriers to success and promote the love of learning. Policies, such as providing for an uninterrupted reading block first thing each morning, minimizes distractions and creates an urgency to begin instruction promptly each day.

The principal and assistant principal model respect and demonstrate the importance of developing strong relationships throughout our organization. This not only includes positive relationships with faculty and students, but also with our families. Administrators celebrate student success through the use of verbal praise, rewards, and even dance parties. We recognize good student behavior at monthly assemblies,

including good behavior that takes place on the school bus.

The administration at JSJ helps develop leadership capacity in our teachers by providing them with high quality professional development, freedom to think outside the box, and opportunities to collaborate with one another. They ensure teachers have the materials and support they need to provide engaging lessons for their students. Teachers are encouraged to share input and create new initiatives. Teacher leaders are mentors to new teachers and provide training and professional development to their co-workers. Our effective and highly motivated instructional coaches provide support and instruction for teachers, and teachers are empowered to be problem solvers as they meet student needs.

JSJ realizes the importance of student leadership and encourages it through many opportunities such as Student Ambassadors, Safety Patrol, and Student of the Month. Students regularly perform jobs in their classrooms and school, such as mail helpers, flag leaders, and library helpers. Students also serve on committees such as our Title I and School Leadership team. Our student leaders are role models for excellence among the other students.

Our principal models leadership, not just by how she leads in our school, but in education throughout our state. She is the District V president for the Alabama Association of Elementary Administrators. She has been the National Distinguished Principal nominee for her district on three different occasions, and was a top three candidate in 2017-18. She is known for working to engage legislators in the educational process. Our principal promotes professional leadership through service and commitment to excellence.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

JSJ strives to be a model school with a reputation for high academic excellence. We attribute much of our success to how we prioritize relationships with students, and their families. We believe that building partnerships between school and home is essential to success. While we recognize that not all students come from supportive families, we do not make excuses for students due to socio-economic status, disability, or any circumstance beyond our control. Our school's philosophy is to do good to people through kindness in any and every circumstance. This commitment helps everyone rise above obstacles that appear.

Our expectations of achieving academic success are communicated through our ongoing efforts to build and strengthen relationships. All grades, kindergarten through fifth, are now self-contained, which allows our faculty and staff to develop relationships with students through small group discussions and engagement. We make learning fun and engaging to increase participation and decrease discipline referrals. Teachers find creative ways to provide incentives that build relationships and establish trust. An example of this occurred recently when a teacher collaborated with an upper grade level teacher concerning a student's apathetic behavior. A treasure box of clothes and accessories were made available to instill intrinsic motivation. This proved to be a successful behavior modification that has led to academic success.

Faculty and staff are constantly evaluating the needs of students. With the unexpected and rapid school closures due to the CoronaVirus, to ensure student success, teachers rallied together to create technological learning opportunities, gather educational materials for those without devices, and utilized social media as an extension to the classroom. Still, we recognize that students' basic needs must be met before learning can occur. Through community support, faculty and staff were able to organize and prepare food packages. With the help of bus drivers, they were able to deliver packages to disadvantaged families on each bus route.

Family engagement is encouraged at JSJ. Faculty members warmly greet parents by name and invite them to functions such as holiday dinners, field trips, and class events. We encourage parental involvement in PTSO and room parenting. Teachers emphasize positive communication and reach out to parents with students' successes, not just needs. Teachers attend events such as ball games to show support to our students outside of the school day. We honor parents annually with a spring tea that expresses our gratitude and celebrates our relationships.