

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name Jefferson Elementary School  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 2600 North McKinley Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Little Rock State AR Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 72207-2730

County Pulaski

Telephone (501) 447-5002 Fax (501) 447-5001

Web site/URL https://www.lrsd.org/page/49 E-mail sandra.register@lrsd.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\* Mr. Michael Poore E-mail mike.poore@lrsd.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Little Rock School District Tel. (501) 447-1000

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. Jeff Wood  
(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**

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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

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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):
- 28 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 7 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 5 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 40 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
<b>PreK</b>	15	25	40
<b>K</b>	49	40	89
<b>1</b>	37	31	68
<b>2</b>	30	21	51
<b>3</b>	28	26	54
<b>4</b>	30	28	58
<b>5</b>	28	17	45
<b>6</b>	0	0	0
<b>7</b>	0	0	0
<b>8</b>	0	0	0
<b>9</b>	0	0	0
<b>10</b>	0	0	0
<b>11</b>	0	0	0
<b>12 or higher</b>	0	0	0
<b>Total Students</b>	217	188	405

\*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):
- 0.6 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 2.3 % Asian
  - 19.1 % Black or African American
  - 4.8 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 72.1 % White
  - 1.1 % 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: 7%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	26
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	2
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	28
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	399
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.07
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	7

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

Arabic, Tagalog, Dastho, Spanish, Grujurati, Urdu

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 2 %

9 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 28 %

Total number students who qualify: 115

8. Students receiving special education services: 14 %

55 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>12</u> Autism                 | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>6</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>28</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>5</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 3

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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	3

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 20:1

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

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

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

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

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

To provide a safe, nurturing environment where all children develop academic, emotional, and social skills that enable them to meet future challenges.

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**

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Jefferson Elementary is a small public school situated in the heart of Cammack Village. Located in midtown Little Rock, it has been an anchor for the neighborhood for the past seventy years. Close to the Arkansas River, deer can be seen roaming through the area as children play outside. The suburb is experiencing resurgence, with many older homes being expanded or rebuilt. This has been a boost for the school, as younger families are moving in and sending their children to Jefferson. Jefferson has a diverse socio-economic and racial makeup and the population varies, from students entering from affluent homes to students who are temporarily without homes. Demographic and socio-economic status of Jefferson students varies among families and reflects the diversity of housing and culture within the attendance zone. The Cammack Village police department is an integral part of the school community. The officers are regularly in the building interacting with the staff, students, and parents. This relationship is community policing at its finest and is a win-win for everyone involved.

In 2019, Jefferson Elementary School was recognized by the Office for Education Policy (OEP) at the University of Arkansas, as a school where students demonstrated high growth on the ACT Aspire. Jefferson Elementary received the following awards: Statewide High Overall Growth: Elementary Level, and High Math Growth: Elementary Level (Central Region). Jefferson Elementary achieved the most growth overall in the Little Rock School District (LRSD), on the ACT Aspire assessment in 2019. Our school was also ranked fifth in the state of Arkansas for achievement in 2019. We moved from 34th in the state to 5th in the state overall in just 2 years. Due to significant growth in our sub groups, and high performance overall, Jefferson has earned a letter grade of A on the state school report card for the last 2 years.

Jefferson Elementary benefits from an engaged and active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and community partners who participate as volunteers in education. They support education through monetary donations as well as give countless volunteer hours to Jefferson students. In the 2019-2020 school year, Jefferson volunteers worked 90+ hours per student.

Jefferson has put into place several programs that help to encourage and challenge students academically and socially, such as the school ambassador program. Students are interviewed by the principal and those chosen become part of a team building program sponsored by Sidney Moncrief, retired Milwaukee Bucks player. They develop leadership skills and learn how to mentor. This program reaches all parts of the student, including their emotional and cultural sides as they learn to appreciate others and their backgrounds. In addition to classroom curriculum and focus on learning, Jefferson offers a broad range of extracurricular opportunities for students. Students actively engage in school programs which meet unique interests such as a vibrant choir program, student leadership, an award winning chess team, and the elementary basketball championship team. Other activities celebrated at Jefferson include drama kids, volleyball, cheer leading, Mathletes, Jefferson Joggers, and community service crews.

Jefferson's media specialist has two wonderful incentive programs that encourage students to read and write daily. Dewey, the Jefferson Library Bunny, has been the attentive listener to readers for over a year now. Dewey is loved by many and was a part of photo shoots and made the local news! Owl Mail at Jefferson is another program run by the Jefferson media specialist and her library helpers. Inspired by Harry Potter, Owl Mail is a great opportunity for students to practice their letter writing skills in a nonthreatening environment. It encourages writing by allowing students to write letters to their friends, teachers, or other staff members and it is delivered once a week by the library helpers.

Jefferson students also have a unique opportunity to participate in the Arkansas Young Storytellers program which identifies students for a mentoring program, pairing a writer with a student participant. The program focuses on improving writing, literacy, and self-confidence in students. Each semester Jefferson staff identifies students who could benefit from this program led by Arkansas Cinema Society members. This program includes not only writing but also a finale "The Big Show" in which scripts are performed by local actors.

Jefferson has implemented several programs and activities that help reach the cultural and socio-emotional

side of students and families. STEAM night was created to introduce students to arts and science in ways that are outside of what a classroom offers. Students help create and use recycled materials to make art. They learn how to use musical instruments that were popular in centuries past, as well as enjoy dancing, music, and food from other cultures. This is an annual program for the entire family. Students who have very limited backgrounds often talk about these experiences in later years as this serves to give them background knowledge that they would not otherwise have.

Jefferson Elementary applies innovative techniques in education through additional hands-on science learning modules provided by a PhD-level scientist working part-time with Jefferson students to supplement science education. Each lesson incorporates Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and LRSD science curriculum objectives while giving students the ability to apply their knowledge with engaging activities that emphasize science and engineering practices.

Jefferson Elementary is committed to excellence in education and would be honored to be a National Blue Ribbon School.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

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

Jefferson Elementary understands and values each individual student. Importance is placed on the whole student as they move from grade level to grade level, from subject to subject, and specialist to specialist. This approach supports the belief that a student is not the responsibility of one educator, but part of a community of educators. The key factor that supports this type of approach is a wide range of communication avenues. Teacher to student communication is of utmost importance to the student's daily environment. Teachers receive continued professional development focused on achievement and areas of potential growth. The administration also communicates with individual students about their expectations. Teachers collaborate about students' needs and create and develop plans for success. The philosophy that every child can achieve is a community approach that includes all family members. A community approach builds the foundation for success such that all parties are part of the pathway to achievement.

Jefferson Elementary utilizes multiple instructional approaches to meet various learning styles of students. When writing lessons, our staff creates a seamless curriculum across the different subjects and grade levels. When teaching sentence structure and sentence types in reading and language arts, the same concepts are incorporated into a math story problem. Calendar math is a staple in all grade levels, as it provides opportunities for daily review and practice as well as introduces new skills. The more ways students use the material taught across different subjects, the more they understand the concepts taught. Jefferson students respond to our overall approach, and this can be seen as you observe students running to hug their teachers, kids giving high fives to classmates, and students actively engaged.

Jefferson staff focuses on multiple ways to achieve positive learning experiences through differentiated instruction, tiered instructional approach, and problem-based learning. Differentiated instruction is used in classrooms to assist each child with their own individual needs. Differentiated volume of reading time allows teachers to meet with students in a small group setting so that skills can be reinforced or reviewed as needed. Through the tiered instructional process, all students achieve success. Our Jefferson team meets monthly to discuss ways to assist students struggling with Tier 1 instruction. Problem-based learning engagement is evident as students build a boat that will float, make paper airplanes that will fly the farthest, or calculate the area of a rug to learn multiplication. Learning is continuous at all times and we utilize assessments to monitor the learning process. Our teachers routinely use assessments to assist in planning, report cards, parent conferences, Response to Intervention (RTI) meetings, and help drive instruction for small groups. The Northwest Education Association (NWEA) assessments are given quarterly and data is analyzed after each test during vertical team meetings. Teachers create portable data walls using colored file folders to organize students' test scores and track student assessment progress in specific domains of math and literacy.

### **1b.** Reading/English language arts

Jefferson Elementary students are taught reading fundamentals using methods and tools teachers have learned through Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (R.I.S.E.) training. Our core curriculum for Reading/English Language Arts consists of Wit and Wisdom. Wit and Wisdom content includes knowledge goals, reading goals, writing goals, listening and speaking goals, and language goals. Our teachers address learning standards by planning lessons which build on previously taught skills across the different grade levels. Each module in Wit and Wisdom lists the module learning goals which are based on the Arkansas Department of Education standards. Wilson's Foundations is used in kindergarten through third grade as Tier 2 instruction for phonics and handwriting curriculum. Heggerty is used to teach phonemic awareness. Wilson's Just Words is a highly explicit, multisensory, decoding and spelling intervention program that teachers use for Tier 2 intervention in fourth and fifth grade. Wilson Reading System (WRS) is used for Tier 3 instruction for students in second through fifth grade. WRS is appropriate for students with significant difficulty in word level decoding, automatic word recognition and fluency, including students with dyslexia

who require an intensive remedial program. All of these programs work together to provide our literacy instruction. Although programs have been provided for Jefferson, our teaching staff modifies and adapts lessons to ensure the success of all students. Direct instruction, indirect instruction, experiential learning, independent study, and interactive instruction are examples of the evidence-based learning strategies implemented at Jefferson Elementary. Teachers use differentiated learning for indirect instruction through small group reading and writing groups as well as intervention groups in any subject.

Jefferson teachers monitor student understanding through daily formative assessments such as exit tickets, online interactive Kahoot quizzes, smart board interactive notebook games, or student notes. Teachers use these assessments to focus small group instruction to preset the lesson in a different way or transition to the the next standard or skill. Teachers receive training to incorporate students' interests and abilities using formative and summative assessments while also identifying what each child needs for success in reading and language arts. Throughout the year, formative data from NWEA interim testing and classroom assessments helps teachers identify student gaps, supports needed, or enrichment. Data from the ACT Aspire summative assessments is also used to pin point strengths and weaknesses. School specialists support the reading program through support for dyslexia, speech, vocabulary, or enrichment for those above grade level expectations. At Jefferson not only do teachers teach the students, but also their families. Jefferson teachers and staff provide strategies to build reading skills with tools that promote collaboration and home connection. Daily parent communication is sent through emails, photos, messages on Class Dojo or Bloomz, and classroom newsletters. Technology also plays a vital role in reading and language development through programming provided by research based sites promoted and provided by our district.

### **1c. Mathematics**

Jefferson's math curriculum is designed in a way so that skills continue and progress, with different depths of understanding within each grade. This approach is ideal to continue learning over the years on a given subject in a more profound way. Every component in the curriculum is supported by an Arkansas state standard. These standards provide a level of expectation for what the students need to be able to do and understand by the end of the year. A mathematics foundation begins with the number sense standard. Using grade level frameworks, teachers use multiple methods of instruction such as direct instruction, cognitively guided instruction, differentiated instruction, problem-based learning, and technology based support. Regardless of the approach, an educator must know what technique is best for the class, small group, or individual. Jefferson educators facilitate learning, ask questions to further student thinking, and provide students with opportunities to collaborate with their peers and problem solve. Our teachers are trained in Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) to build on number sense and the discovery of what students already know to solve mathematical problems. Common evidence based practices in the classroom include math games which provide an extension for practice, small group enrichment, use of manipulatives and tools to solve problems, and online supplemental platforms such as Math Prodigy, Espark Learning, and Splash Math. Jefferson teachers use partner games during math rotations to allow students opportunities to apply and practice skills being taught, also allowing the teacher time to observe growth and student needs. Classroom teachers implement daily morning math reviews, whole group calendar math lessons, number talks, and the math workshop model. Our staff incorporates technology based practices so that students become familiar with the technology in a society where this skill is expected in all job fields. Additional math enrichment includes chess, which is an extracurricular activity offered to all second through fifth graders, STEM lessons conducted by the science specialist and GT specialist, and Mathletes.

Jefferson students are given assessments at the beginning of the school year using the Scholastic Math Inventory and the CGI screener. These assessments allow teachers to target instruction. They address which skills a student has mastered and which ones need interventions. Deficiencies are addressed through small group instruction when a student is performing below grade level. CGI word problems are multi-tiered, therefore, students choose numbers based on his or her understanding. Classroom assessments vary from formative daily assessments such as verbal discussions, exit tickets, number talks, and other quick check-ins, to summative assessments. These may include unit exams or standardized tests. Instruction is data driven by NWEA interim assessments and ACT Aspire summative assessments. Jefferson Elementary employs an academic interventionist to review student assessments and aid in the identification of students in need of

additional math support. The academic interventionist also provides small group and one on one instruction to increase student achievement in math.

#### **1d. Science**

The Jefferson Science curriculum differs from other curriculums in that areas of study vary from year to year rather than continuing skills each succeeding year. Kindergarten focuses on one set of topics, first grade emphasizes different science topics, and by second grade students return to the same ideas introduced in kindergarten, though at a different level of complexity. Jefferson Elementary utilizes the extensive science curriculum map provided by the LRSD which includes the Science Fusion curriculum, Science Friday, Brain Pop Junior, and Mystery Science for additional instructional needs. The LRSD science curriculum map links grade level lessons to the NGSS including engineering practices, crosscutting concepts, and disciplinary core ideas in science that all students need to meet science education objectives. Science assessments are formative tests and determine what a student knows about a topic.

Science standards are taught in as many cross curricular instructional opportunities as possible. This approach to teaching science standards allows for applied learning opportunities. Jefferson Elementary places high importance on science by dedicating a part time PhD-level science specialist to meet with classes to help reach the science benchmarks. STEM is encouraged and supported through classroom teachers, science teacher, and the GT specialist. Each year Jefferson holds a STEAM Night for Jefferson families that includes staff and community partners who conduct interactive lessons. Fourth and fifth grade students participate in a science fair each year to help foster the inquiry of science based learning. During the fall semester, the science specialist models a science investigation from start to finish and provides templates for each step of the scientific method. Cross-cutting skills in writing, math, and presentations are incorporated into student science fair projects. In conclusion, the Jefferson science program is producing a new generation of science students conducting hands-on activities that further students' thinking.

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

In Jefferson's Social Studies curriculum, students participate in learning experiences that provide engaging activities that allow students to put themselves in the place of individuals in history and express how they would feel or react in a given situation. Our students engage in discussions about current events and holidays and how they are related to our daily lives. Each grade level studies historic individuals, timelines, geography, citizenship, economic principles, and utilize technology for research. Students actively participate in civic responsibilities helping others in the community through food drives, coat drives, toy drives, thank you notes and baked goods for the community firemen and police officers, and they participate in a school wide assembly to honor veterans and their service to our country.

In the intermediate grades, we utilize the Social Studies Alive curriculum, which is provided by LRSD. Social Studies Alive includes many hands-on learning activities for students, as well as games they can play while learning. For example, while 4th graders study the southeast region, students play the Jamestown Survival Game in which they learn about the difficulties that the first settlers faced when coming to the colonies. In order to integrate literacy with these activities, after playing games, students write persuasive letters to a friend or family member pretending to be a settler in the year 1608 and provide reasons why someone would not want to come to Jamestown. Students are actively engaged and we strive to bring lessons to life through authentic learning experiences. They listen to guest speakers, take virtual field trips, as well as field trips to historical sites, and they experience reenactments of historical figures. Students are taught through discussions, research, analyzing writing, and simulations.

Our fifth grade students complete an in-depth study of the 1957 integration of Little Rock Central High School. Students specifically study the impact the integration had on the people, both young and old, of the city of Little Rock from the perspective of a white child who befriends a child who "passes" as white. While studying this unit, students take a field trip to the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site to further study this time period in Little Rock and the United States. Additionally, students take a field trip to the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee. The trip to the National Civil Rights Museum

solidifies for students the impact that the integration of Central High had on the nation in 1957 and the impact that it currently has on our culture.

**1f. For secondary schools:**

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

Jefferson Elementary offers Pre-K students quality early learning experiences where teachers nurture and support students to help prepare them to enter kindergarten with the skills they need to be successful. The core curriculum areas provided in Pre-K are organized into nine domains of development and learning. These domains include Social and Emotional Development, Cognitive Development, Physical Development and Health, Language Development, Emergent Literacy, Mathematical Thinking, Science and Technology, Social Studies, Creativity and Aesthetics. They present child development across a continuum that is developmentally and culturally appropriate to help young students transition from one developmental stage to another. Subject areas within these domains include phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, emergent writing, oral language, math, science, and social studies. These vertically align with kindergarten language arts and math standards to support the transition from early childhood into K-12 education. Furthermore, research shows that students who have positive educational early childhood experiences are more likely to experience school success, have higher graduation rates, demonstrate higher proficiency in math and language skills, have better cognitive and social skills, and are more skilled at self-regulation. School readiness involves a range of skills and developmental domains. The U.S. Department of Education defines the "essential domains for readiness" as language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social-emotional development. Students that attend Pre-K at Jefferson are provided these essential domains and experience and acclimate to the elementary school setting in a sort of protective bubble. When they start kindergarten, they are already comfortable and familiar with many school routines and procedures. Students are more confident in the new skills they are learning because of their previous experiences. Kindergarten and first grade students that attend Pre-K are more successful with problem solving, writing, expressing their ideas, and working with others.

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

At Jefferson, "Art is everything." Art is a way for students to communicate across different times, places, and cultures. Art supports other curriculum areas because it invites students to make connections between core knowledge and students' imaginations. Our students practice the process of art criticism and through this process they learn how to describe, analyze, interpret, and judge artwork. When children imagine, they think deeply and visualize in their mind. Students practice essential skills through hands on activities that connect art with math through measurement, estimation, and 2D vs. 3D spatial understanding. Students make connections between art and language through exploring how the image in a story can be literal vs. metaphorical or symbolic. The art teacher plans lessons based on data that teachers share during vertical teaming to support students' growth. Jefferson's music curriculum supports the acquisition of essential skills by meeting various learning styles. Music incorporates math, reading, science, and social studies, as well as teamwork and leadership skills. All of these are important in an ensemble and in the music room. Music impacts students' physical, emotional, and intellectual development. The music curriculum is designed to teach through all learning domains. Auditory learners listen to music and find mathematical patterns in the beat and rhythm, the sound of the instruments, melody and harmony help them identify the mood, and they are quick to memorize patterns and musical themes. Kinesthetic learners feel the beat and rhythm as well as the mood of the music. Their body movements respond to the mood and themes of the music. Jumping to a fast paced rhythm or relaxing during a slow paced song is an example of their body movements. Visual learners can see the melody and rhythm in their minds and like to follow listening maps or music scores. These students are able to draw pictures and write vivid descriptions about the themes they see in the music.

The Jefferson physical education (PE) program is all about meeting the needs of all students, not just the athletically inclined. The goal of our PE department is about getting students active today and excited about the lifetime benefits of health and wellness. Promoting a healthy lifestyle means giving students the essential skills and knowledge to use in all aspects of life and emphasizing fitness and physical well-being, as well as

competition and resilience found in group activities and team sports. Our program is about assessing students' progress in reaching their personal physical activity and fitness goals. Jefferson students participate every year in the Little Rockers Kids Marathon, Jump Rope for Heart, and teachers implement Go Noodle exercises daily in their classrooms. Our students participate in at least 3 hours of art, music, and PE instruction each week.

Jefferson has one fully equipped computer lab with 28 Thin Client computers, two desktop computers, a smart board, two printers, and multiple iPads and chrome books for students to collaborate and research. Students are given numerous opportunities to create and enhance their learning experiences with new tools, apps, and strategies they learn in the computer lab. All classrooms are provided with smart boards, desktop computers, and are equipped with multiple iPads or one-to-one Google chrome books to use during center rotations, and to complete research projects online.

Jefferson is fortunate to have a library media center that is the heart of the school. The librarian strives to create an environment where students feel safe to relax without the stresses of the world weighing on them. Books are our librarian's passion and she is happiest when sharing the love of books with her students. This helps create a love of reading and a win for literacy at Jefferson. At Jefferson we are unique in that the students are able to read to our library bunny named Dewey. Research suggests that struggling readers are able to let go of their anxiety when reading to a pet. Dewey doesn't care if they struggle to pronounce a word, he just listens. It is a heartwarming experience for all. Our library program is multi-faceted in that, the main purpose is literacy, but it also incorporates technology, and has embraced the growing trend of Makerspace. Our Jefferson library houses 12 student computers and 15 student IPads which allow for students to utilize library and media technology resources for research. Students explore various Makerspace stations in an interactive environment while collaborating, designing, and problem solving to create projects while the librarian acts as a facilitator monitoring students' learning

At Jefferson, all students learn various life skills throughout the year. Decision making, problem solving, self-esteem, positive self-regard, effective communication skills, personal safety and wellness, goal setting and career awareness are some of the skills provided weekly through our school counselor.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

Jefferson's teaching staff tailors instruction to meet diverse and individual needs. Analyses of formative and summative assessments inform purposeful instruction and aid in identification of students performing below grade level. When a student performs below grade level, teachers at Jefferson take action to close learning gaps. Implementing Response to Intervention (RTI), the student is screened and progress monitored accordingly. When reading is an area of weakness, our reading interventionist evaluates the student. Below level readers are given Foundations instruction at least 4 times per week. Jefferson also uses The Wilson Reading System (WRS) for students scoring in the 15th percentile or below in reading. WRS is a comprehensive intensive Tier 3 program for students in 2nd grade and higher. If data indicates a student is not responding to interventions, teachers request an evaluation by the Jefferson Student Based Intervention (SBIT) team. The SBIT team reviews all areas of need and recommends additional interventions or creates a special education referral. Students performing significantly below grade level with qualified testing scores are placed in one of two self-contained (SC) classrooms. Within the SC classrooms, teachers utilize appropriately leveled curriculum to aid students in core academic needs. The instruction is leveled based on individualized educational goals. Teachers and staff continually work to improve functional, social, and academic levels in order to increase students' overall achievements in the general population. Teachers engage parents, utilize volunteers, and guide paraprofessionals through essentials aspects of learning so they can contribute to each student's success. In addition, specialists include core curriculum skills into lessons such as math skills incorporated into PE lessons to show students how learning is connected. Jefferson's targeted team approach develops instruction to meet the needs of each student, especially those below grade level, to achieve success.

### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

Students who perform above grade level are identified by the classroom teacher as they differentiate the curriculum for students and small groups. Teachers observe in the classroom and gather data from classroom assessments and NWEA interim assessments. Teachers assess during the first week of school in order to set placements. Assessments continue every few weeks as students move in and out of small groups according to changes in levels. Based on a student's performance, teachers differentiate learning for those performing above grade level through cooperative learning, flexible grouping, small groups, self-paced stations, and individual instruction. If students work above their grade level in a particular subject, then acceleration is considered for the student. In this scenario, the student is taught the subject area by another teacher to meet the needs of the child's learning rate. Additional measures include student reflection time, student conferences to set goals, and parent meetings to share progress.

Technology based tools for above grade level students include Math Prodigy, eSpark, and RazKids. Each program includes assessments, interactive tools, and the customization of assignments to meet students needs. All K-2 students meet weekly during 30 minute enrichment lessons with a trained Gifted and Talented facilitator. Students are taught logical reasoning strategies, creativity lessons, and effective needs. The highest tier Jefferson offers is a 3rd-5th grade Gifted and Talented pull out program. Students are identified through a series of summative and gifted assessments. The Gifted and Talented school based identification committee decides placement while the district Standards committee approves. Students are provided 150 minutes a week of classes focused on higher level thinking, research, critical thinking, creativity, and communication through problem and project-based learning, STEAM curriculum, and independent projects. Jefferson offers additional programming such as Quiz Bowl, Spelling Bee, and Chess to challenge students above grade level.

### **3c. Special education**

The special education team at Jefferson educates students who are on the autism spectrum or who have learning disabilities, dyslexia , ADHD, anxiety disorders, emotional disabilities, or any disability that impairs learning as defined by public law 94-142. Special education is, at its core, an intervention based emotional setting. An education plan is designed specifically for each student, and that plan becomes a living, breathing document. It grows and changes as the student does. It is the goal of our staff to reduce the gaps in learning and achievement, and ensure success for all students. Differentiating instruction for such students is a high priority at Jefferson. We focus on research based curriculum and lessons that guide students in the understanding of vital skills needed to obtain learning goals and reduce gaps in achievement. At Jefferson, some students qualify through testing and are placed in a self-contained (SC) classroom setting because testing reveals they are functioning socially or academically severely below grade level.

We establish well-synchronized teams including the classroom teacher and specialists to serve our diverse learners. All teachers are familiar with our special education students' individualized education plans (IEPs) and necessary modifications.

Jefferson ensures consistency for all students. Our staff has a student-centered mindset. Our efforts to boost learning are most effective when we share the same goal. But a "student-centered mindset" goes beyond initial modifications at our school. We pay close attention to individual students' progress and adjust our approaches throughout the year. If any student performs below grade level, we analyze the data, and then work with the student individually or in a small group to re-teach the skills and concepts, differentiate their learning, and modify their IEP goals. Our careful administration of these interventions and modifications, and our monthly SBIT consultation is an excellent way to close the achievement gap. Clear communication of modifications and accommodations helps close this gap of the students in special education. The key to success is making sure all students' needs are communicated to those who can help to improve the students' performance while recognizing the need for privacy of the student.

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

At Jefferson, the classroom teachers, English Language Learner (ELL) school coordinator, Student Based Intervention Team (SBIT), English as a Second Language (ESL) testing coordinator, and the school counselor meet to discuss ELL student achievement and make necessary instructional and testing modifications. Teachers use Ellevation as an ESL resource for instruction. Our school district has provided Ellevation training as well as numerous professional development opportunities for our staff on various interventions to use with ELL students. Rosetta Stone is another online resource available to any student. ELL students work in small groups and have peer tutors. Teachers use various strategies to present directions so they are easily understood by all. ELL students are provided one-on-one instruction, and many ELL students have tutors and paraprofessionals that work with them twice weekly during center rotations and interventions. At Jefferson the LPAC team is made up of the ELL coordinator and the classroom teacher as well as the principal and the counselor. The LPAC team meets once a month to discuss new modifications or any changes that need to be made for students. Parents are involved as well with the child's LPAC team and can request additional modifications when needed.

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

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Jefferson provides a warm and supportive culture for students. Teachers at Jefferson Elementary engage students with hands-on learning opportunities and provide various teaching strategies to meet different learning styles. For example, in order to multiply large numbers, students may be shown partial products, distributive property, and expanded form methods and then the student is allowed to select the strategy they feel most comfortable and successful using. Students are engaged in lessons by the use of multimedia and games that are selected to enhance instruction. Educational videos and songs are used in the classroom as well as various math games in which student engagement and motivation are very high. Students at Jefferson are motivated with positive reinforcement. At Jefferson Elementary School, our principal motivates students by sitting down and spending time with each student. When the principal of the school is sitting down with you and believes in you, that is inspiration for any student to want to do their best. Being at school every day so students can learn has its perks. Jefferson is very creative and has incentives each month for students who are not tardy or absent. Students are rewarded with a fun activity and it motivates them not to be absent or tardy.

Jefferson classes have daily morning meetings. The benefits of the morning meeting encourage a positive environment, provide a sense of trust, teach students to be patient, and to be respectful and listen. Students feel important and this gives them the opportunity to express their feelings and learn about their peers. Morning meetings support all aspects of learning socially, academically, and emotionally.

Our school staff and families promote various events throughout the year that allow opportunities for students and their families to engage in social events, charity and community contributions, athletic events, and programs, and art events.

Teachers encourage students to take creative risks, for example the young writers program, open ended art assignments, exploring various music genres and instruments, PE activities, literacy groups, GT curriculum and science fair that encourages investigation and discovery, and others. Parents really seem to enjoy the fact that their children have a variety of outlets.

For students who need help emotionally, all staff has been trained to look for signs that could lead to serious issues. Teachers work closely with the counselor and there is an outside agency available that consists of three therapists who meet with teachers, parents, and students. When a student is having a difficult time dealing with strong emotions, some teachers have a break box in their room full of sensory toys for students to use. This provides students with a positive coping strategy when they have strong emotions and helps them calm down quickly.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Our Jefferson community is very supportive and a key to our success. The administration and staff work hard to keep the parents and community members involved and informed. Families are encouraged to eat lunch with their students, volunteer in the classrooms, attend parent-teacher conferences, and attend special events. The Jefferson Parent Teacher Association (PTA) plans special events throughout the year such as the Fall Carnival, Grandparent's Week, Book Fair, STEAM Night, and Jefferson Jubilee. These events provide opportunities for parents and grandparents to participate and enjoy a fun family event, and encourage parents to get involved. Our Jefferson community is very supportive of the Book Fair that occurs twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Volunteers come and help the youngest of our students shop and make wish lists. This year, Jefferson partnered with Central Arkansas Library System (CALs) to ensure all our students have access to utilize CALs cards for research and eBooks. The PTA monthly meetings often include guest speakers or student performances to encourage parents to attend the meetings. Our PTA sends out an email each week with school news to ensure that parents are informed. The PTA also has a strong social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These are great platforms to quickly disseminate information and share exciting news and pictures. Teachers use mobile apps such as Bloomz

and Class Dojo to support student learning and communicate with parents. Teachers also send weekly newsletters home via email or hard copies in backpacks. All students have a communications folder or agenda to show parents the learning goals and assignments. Teachers outline communication expectations at the beginning of the year. The staff works together to make sure that the expectations are similar for the school, so parents are accustomed to the process. Student achievement is shared through test scores, Home Access Center (HAC), and at parent teacher conferences twice a year. We are fortunate to have several community partners that support our students at Jefferson. Our partners are valuable assets when donations and volunteers are needed. Catering To You, Channel 7, Janet Jones Realty, Westover Hills Presbyterian Church, and Centennial Bank provide assistance and lend support and resources to assist our students with special events. At Jefferson Elementary, we are blessed to have great family and community support throughout all grade levels through the entire year. Festivals, neighborhood police officers, and our community volunteers help make learning fun for everyone.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Teachers and staff at Jefferson Elementary feel valued and supported because of the assistance and support from our leadership team and school administration. For example, our parents provide snacks for every professional development meeting, and our administrator provides door prizes, as well as, little things, like a coffee bar with personalized decorations and hand written notes of thanks or appreciation. This environment makes teachers feel appreciated and valued. Jefferson Elementary teachers and their administrator participate in professional development designed to improve instructional methods and student achievement. At Jefferson, we set high expectations for our students and our staff. As teachers we are required to create a professional growth plan (PGP) each year to address individual goals as well as a collaborative building grade level goal. Teachers are required to have 18 hours connected to their PGP. Teachers are asked to complete a self-assessment at the beginning of the year and then reflect on this at the end of each year. Our professional development opportunities are always centered on what is needed by the staff. As a staff we meet to discuss state performance on our school report card and summative test results, and use that data to determine our professional development needs for the upcoming school year. Our professional development approach is delivered in a variety of ways to meet the needs of all staff. Administrators and specialists work with teachers to develop classroom management skills to improve teaching and instructional strategies. Specialists discuss best practices for instruction with classroom teachers, and opportunities are provided for teachers to observe other teachers and plan and co-teach lessons. Our administration coordinates peer visits when teachers express a need for feedback.

At Jefferson our Professional Learning Communities (PLCS) meet weekly by grade levels. Monthly our teams meet for vertical teaming, to help teachers focus on the direction of the curriculum. Our teachers have dedicated time embedded within the school day to collaborate, plan, and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of our students. Our teachers discuss student work and compare data across grade levels using assessment data to differentiate instruction for their students. Teachers analyze data to determine effective teaching practices and determine prerequisite skills needed for student success. Classroom teachers discuss the use of appropriate manipulatives when planning math lessons, implementing technology in lessons, engagement activities, critical thinking questions, and writing across the curriculum.

### **4. School Leadership:**

There is one building administrator at Jefferson and she is effective for many reasons. Our administrator is detail oriented, focused, encouraging, and supportive. She is involved in all aspects of her staff and students' lives, always follows through, and leads by example. It is evident that students are put first, and she has earned the respect and trust of staff, students, and parents. Our administrator has instilled many philosophies that make our school successful. One is that every child can learn and meet high expectations. Because of this, our staff works hard to ensure that each individual student's needs are met academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. The attention and care given to our students provides them with a foundation for success and achievement. The administrator sets high expectations, but also cultivates a culture that promotes continuous learning, creativity, and innovation by focusing on planning and teaching. Our principal is dedicated to knowing the content which should be taught at each grade level and making sure teachers have the resources needed to be successful. The administration seeks appropriate professional

development to aid teachers. This guidance helps teachers know they are supported and helps teachers overcome obstacles. Another philosophy is that every single person plays an important role in the success of our school. For example, our custodian is just as invested in the academic achievement of Jefferson students as the classroom teachers. The staff at Jefferson knows that our leader supports us and absolutely values our opinions and makes for a warm positive climate. Everybody works together to make sure that our school meets the needs of all students. The administrator meets with students individually to help them establish goals and acknowledges areas of growth and areas to improve. She celebrates progress loud and clear and encourages students when they experience difficulties. The students are our main priority. Our success starts with the leadership's dedication and expectations, which leads the staff to be dedicated and expect each student to be successful and grow. Jefferson's strong leadership makes the school. Our administrator has a way of inspiring others to do their best. She earns respect by being visible daily and doesn't ask anyone to do anything that she wouldn't do herself. Ronald Reagan once said, "The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things."

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Jefferson Elementary has been a high performing school for many years due to factors that include a positive learning community between parents and teachers and a dedicated administration and staff. With a new administrator in place in 2016, expectations were ramped up. Being complacent about high test scores was not enough. Now was the time to push for growth.

The one practice that is most instrumental in the school's success is the emphasis placed on looking at each student's strengths and weaknesses and making a plan to show growth. Formative assessments, analyzed by grade level teachers, play a big role in developing targeted instruction and intervention. Student performance is examined using standardized testing data. Given three times yearly, it provides detailed information showing where each student scores within each domain. From this data, small group targeted lessons are created, and teachers communicate with parents about the needs of their children.

Teachers interpret and use the assessment data in investigative teamwork instruction utilizing curriculum standards and best practices. Jefferson teachers demonstrate openness in learning and growing with new and innovative instruction using emerging technologies to meet the needs of each student.

Teachers are expected to meet the state and district requirements as well as the needs of the students being taught each day. The staff spends time as a whole, by grade level and independently, analyzing student data to drive instruction. Vertical team meetings are arranged so ideas and successes can be shared and obstacles overcome. These professional learning communities allow teachers to collaborate and maximize the time they have with students during the school day.

The principal meets with third, fourth, and fifth grade students each nine weeks to review test scores and establish learning goals. Making a tremendous impact on student achievement, these one-on-one meetings focus on current student progress within the classroom and interim assessment test scores. These interactions are a positive experience for the students building their confidence in learning and motivating them to achieve additional goals.

Placing an emphasis on student performance and designing lessons and interventions derived from data has pushed Jefferson to receive state recognition for overall performance and growth. The principal has led the team to set high standards and expectations, but also cultivates a culture that promotes continuous learning, creativity and innovation by focusing on planning and teaching. The past five years Jefferson has consistently scored in the top 10% of schools in Arkansas and the top 5% in the last two years. Emphasis is placed on "teaching bell to bell" and data driven collaborative learning. It's clearly working.