

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

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

School Mailing Address 364 Nelson Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Biloxi State MS Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 39531-2230

County Harrison

Telephone (228) 436-5135 Fax (228) 388-2313

Web site/URL https://www.biloxischools.net/poppsferry E-mail vivian.malone@biloxischools.net

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.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Mr. Marcus Boudreaux E-mail marcus.boudreaux@biloxischools.net
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Biloxi Public School District Tel. (228) 374-1810

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.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Jim Wallis
(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.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 1 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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 | 74 | 64 | 138 |
| 1 | 60 | 45 | 105 |
| 2 | 48 | 61 | 109 |
| 3 | 60 | 69 | 129 |
| 4 | 50 | 62 | 112 |
| 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 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 | 292 | 301 | 593 |

*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
 - 2.2 % Asian
 - 34.7 % Black or African American
 - 15.9 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0.5 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 37.8 % White
 - 8.9 % 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: 35%

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

Popp's Ferry Elementary is located on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and is among ten school districts in the three coastal counties. Biloxi is home to Keesler Air Force Base and our neighboring city of Gulfport is home to the Naval Construction Battalion. Military families tend to be very mobile. Additionally, a high percentage of the families that Popp's Ferry serves tend to come from low income households. These families tend to move frequently along the Coast to find more affordable housing and/or jobs. Popp's Ferry's zone in Biloxi also has the highest number of low-rent housing and apartment complexes in the city.

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 | 93 |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year | 111 |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)] | 204 |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018 | 577 |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4) | 0.35 |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100 | 35 |

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

Arabic, Chinese, Patois, Spanish, Urdu

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 8 %
50 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 68 %

Total number students who qualify: 403

8. Students receiving special education services: 12 %

72 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>7</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>15</u> Developmental Delay | <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>46</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</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: 7

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. | 28 |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc. | 9 |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students. | 23 |
| Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 2 |

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 21:1

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% | 94% | 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.

| Post-Secondary Status | |
|---|----|
| Graduating class size | 0 |
| Enrolled in a 4-year college or university | 0% |
| Enrolled in a community college | 0% |
| Enrolled in career/technical training program | 0% |
| Found employment | 0% |
| Joined the military or other public service | 0% |
| Other | 0% |

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

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

Prepare students for life by developing a genuine love for learning coupled with a commitment and dedication to graduate from high school with their peers.

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

PART III - SUMMARY

The city of Biloxi, Mississippi, located along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, has a rich cultural and maritime history and is best known for its local fishing and seafood industries, the casino industry, and beautiful beaches lining miles and miles of coastline. Since 1941, Biloxi has been home to Keesler Air Force Base which today continues to dramatically accelerate our community's worldly focus. Biloxi's more than three centuries of history and unique cultural exchange are important factors that enrich the lives of our students and teachers within the Biloxi Public School District (BPSD). BPSD is currently made up of six elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Of these, Popp's Ferry Elementary (PFE) has experienced noteworthy growth and acknowledgement within the past seven to eight years and continues to maintain success and exceed set goals.

Established in 1960, the staff at PFE have serviced students in grades K-6. To accommodate an ever growing student population, it became necessary to reconfigure schools; and in 2017, PFE changed to a K-4 school. Since this reconfiguration, the average student enrollment has fluctuated between 550 and 600 students with faculty and support staff numbering 64. More than 50% of the teachers at PFE hold master's degrees or higher. The school is committed to the district mission of "Excellence From All, For All." Simultaneously, PFE adheres to their own belief of "Popp's Ferry Proud" in support of the district vision of excellence in all areas (academics, activities, and attitude). Popp's Ferry Proud is the known mantra and students take a daily pledge to uphold pride in all aspects of life, to graduate with their peers, to believe and become. Through the two parallel visions, our staff and students work daily to be the best they can each day.

The students and staff at Popp's Ferry are challenged to reach for and meet goals that they set for themselves through our focus on using a growth mindset. We have an inclusive school community with students from various ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds as well as educational levels. We are a Title I school with 68% of our students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The educational levels of the parents of our students range from below high school 12th grade to post-graduate school level. We have a strong special education inclusion practice in place in our school where we implement universal designs and strategies for learning thereby targeting all of our students. We work to meet our students' emotional, behavioral, and academic needs through the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) utilizing the student response system with three tiers of strategies and practices. Our full-time academic/behavior strategist works with our teachers to meet the needs of all students. Our full-time registered nurse addresses the medical needs of our students while at school each day. We also offer after school tutoring to our students as well as a special Saturday School tutoring program during the school year that offers additional academic support and instruction for our students. Three day tutors are also hired on a part-time basis to provide additional support to struggling students.

It is of great importance for our school setting to encourage and promote positive interactions and maintain successful, personal relationships. This alone influences our academic achievements and encourages an assortment of expressive styles which promotes social and emotional well-being. Within the past seven years, several unique programs have been deep rooted within our school to place special emphasis on student goals and growth. Among the most memorable is the graduation commitment established with every student early on in their educational pathway. PFE adopted a banner signing assembly where by signing a graduation banner and displaying it in the school halls for all to see, students and staff demonstrate the universal belief of success in each and every student. This banner will follow students through high school and through graduation.

Numerous student clubs at PFE have been implemented within the past five to seven years. This creates more opportunities for teachers to recognize and carefully select students that exhibit the potential to enhance both leadership and social skills which are essential for success beyond the traditional classroom. Popp's Ferry's National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS) has been doing great work around campus and within the community for the past four years. Most recently, the NEHS 4th Graders were selected as an Outstanding Service Project Award recipient for 2020. During the 2019-2020 school year, PFE initiated the first ever Biloxi Kiwanis sponsored Little K-Kids Club. These students were excited to participate in various beautification activities around campus and collaborate with other school groups on local community

projects. The Student Council committee has been in charge of campus beautification and restoring the grounds to boost school pride and has taken on a very successful school recycling program. The Yearbook and WPFE News Crew greet students each morning with school announcements and encourage words of wisdom while providing reminders of the school's Positive Behavior incentives and expectations.

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

The rigorous Mississippi State Standards for all subject areas are utilized at Popp’s Ferry Elementary (PFE) as the instructional blueprint. A variety of research and evidence-based curricula and programs are used for instruction with students in conjunction with a common instructional pacing guide for each grade level and subject area are used within all of the district’s elementary schools. PFE uses common standards-based assessments in each grade level and district mid-term and end of term common assessments. In accordance with MTSS guidelines, students are screened three times a year in reading, writing, and math to guide teachers in addressing student strengths and weaknesses throughout the year. Monthly data meetings with teachers and all support teachers are conducted to ensure students are progressing and on track to meet individual goals. Plans of actions are adjusted accordingly at each monthly meeting to address specific concerns on an individual basis and parents are involved and informed regularly on the response of their child.

A supportive community partners with PFE to provide students and teachers with a wide array of opportunities. Most recently, PFE partnered with different members from different branches of the military to establish a Reading Heroes program. This initiative adopted men and women in uniform to mentor and read with students one to one, gave opportunity for them to support and collaborate with teachers, while encouraging a love of reading.

The daily mission at PFE is to provide an educational climate where all students have the opportunity to achieve academic success at their own pace, develop physical and emotional well-being, and become productive, responsible citizens. PFE staff embraces this mission, promoting it through their dedication, respect, high expectations, and a firm belief in the capabilities of each student.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Reading and English Language Arts (ELA) have a variety of key components. The focus of these components are addressed through the following programs utilized by our students. In kindergarten through second grades, our basal series, Journeys, published by Houghton-Mifflin, Ready Reading program through Curriculum Associates, provide the bulk of our instructional materials. Our students in third and fourth grades primarily utilize the Ready Reading program though Curriculum Associates. In addition to the main programs, students in all grades use the following programs to supplement instructions: The Reading Renaissance Accelerated Reading (AR) program, Project Read phonics instruction, Lexia, Flocabulary, Brain Pop, and iReady reading software programs. A wide array of incentives is used to support the reading programs currently in place, such as the Accelerated Reader (AR) student recognition for those reaching their individual goals, AR recognition in the library with special parties, and through school-wide recognition on our morning WPFE announcements. Students who meet their AR goal are invited to participate in schoolwide celebrations at the end of each term. Classes that achieve a high percentage of students meeting their goals are also recognized with special class parties and rewards. Our students complete a reading fair project annually and participate in our school reading fair. While first place winners in each division advance to our district reading fair, students placing in the top three of each division are recognized for their accomplishments. As a school, we also celebrate Read Across America Week and Dr. Seuss’ birthday with a special focus on the importance of reading. During the week preceding our Christmas break, community members and educators from across the district read favorite holiday books to our students during our library classes while enjoying hot chocolate and cookies. The librarians annual “Christmas Corner” is an event that staff and students look forward to each year.

Writing is a major focus or our Language Arts program and is embedded in all aspects of the curriculum. Although grammar and communication are targeted, the writing component is an important part of the implementation. Student writing is displayed throughout the school, both inside and outside each classroom

and in our main hallways. Google classroom is used in second through fourth grades as part of the writing instruction. During weekly Computer Specials, our students practice keyboarding skills to improve their typing ability. This is an important aspect and critical skill to student success on the annual state mandated assessments which are administered electronically. Writing rubrics have been developed for each grade level to use for instruction and assessment. Standards Mastery checks are completed periodically to ensure that students have mastered the necessary state standards.

1c. Mathematics

Kindergarten through fourth grades math instruction is primarily carried out with programs, such as Ready Math through Curriculum Associates and Renaissance's Accelerated Math. A variety of software programs, such as iReady Math through Curriculum Associates, Freckle Math provided through Renaissance, Flocabulary math videos, and BrainPop, are utilized to supplement our core curriculum. In all grade levels, math fluency is practiced daily with a formal fluency assessment at the end of each term. The district also provides a Math Instructional Coach to work with teachers both on curriculum design and classroom management. Multiple professional development opportunities are provided to staff throughout the school year to ensure teachers are utilizing best practices regarding mathematics instruction. Through the monthly academic strategist meetings, teachers reassess student progress and focus on effective use of Title I Tutors to target individual students showing deficiencies in math skills.

1d. Science

Science is offered in all grade levels, much of which is embedded in our reading and ELA curriculum. Science instruction takes place using the interactive program Mississippi Science, published by Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt. Students are provided instruction through a consumable textbook and through hands-on directed inquiry lessons. Third and fourth grade students are required to construct a science fair project that is entered into the school science fair. This process builds research skills and correlates with teaching the scientific method instruction. During the 2019-2020 school year, thirty-two projects from PFE advanced to the Regional Science Fair. While kindergarten through second grades are not required to participate, they are highly encouraged to do so. All of our grades take students on local annual field trips to educational facilities, such as the Marine and Research Center and the Stennis Space Center. Both of these locations are highly geared toward the sciences. Each grade level takes at least one field trip per year tied to the standards taught within that grade level. This is not only a way to reinforce learning of the standards in a real world way, but it also exposes students to areas of our community and nearby towns that they may not experience otherwise. Students at PFE participate in a variety of STEM based activities throughout the school year. One example of this is our collaboration with Mississippi Power in which representatives of this company visit with our students in special assemblies on energy efficiency and the effects that smart choices have on the community. Demonstrations are provided illustrating ways in which students can be more energy efficient at home; and, each student is provided a kit to take home with energy efficient light bulbs and a checklist to complete with their parents.

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

Social Studies is offered at all grade levels, and Mississippi History is studied in the fourth grade. As with science, our social studies curriculum is primarily embedded in our reading and ELA instruction. Each year, our fourth grade students participate in a wide-array of activities during our Mississippi Day events. The fourth grade teachers work closely with many local community members, businesses, artists, and local artisans to bring in guest speakers to share activities with our students that are Mississippi related. In years past the students have participated in school elections, mock national elections and this school year our students have been actively engaged in the 2020 Census.

Additionally, PFE Fine Arts teachers fit their instructional outcomes to compliment classroom instruction and themes while bringing to light the many avenues of artistic expression through academia. This focus continues to encourage each to be their own artist in their own unique way. For example, the PFE art teacher collaborates with the 4th grade teachers to teach a Mississippi Delta Blues Art lesson in conjunction with 4th grade Mississippi History instruction. Students discover Mississippi Blues Musicians and the music they

contributed to the world while learning their location, history, and unique story. Black History month is celebrated through art and music in ways to enrich the learning experience. For the 2019-2020 school year students in K-2 created drawings and tempera paintings inspired by the life of civil rights activist, Rosa Parks. Students in grades 3-4 created colorful zinnias in the style of Folk artist, Clementine Hunter. During Music classes, students were able to hear and explore the different instruments used to create music authentic to a specific genre or spiritual.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students attend physical education, art, music, library, and computer lab classes for forty-five minutes once a week. These classes are typically referred to as our “Specials Classes.” Our Specials Team works closely with teachers to provide both remedial and enrichment support. They also work with teachers to promote instructional practices.

The first PFE CREATE (gifted program) and Robotics Team began in 2013-2014 and took home the championship. Since, close to 50 awards have been issued from best robotic build, to team spirit awards, to best team mentor. This pride extends beyond competition as students from this group often volunteer regularly for school community service projects. These students are known to lend helping hands to lower grades during assemblies, provide support for students in the Autism program on Field Day, or daily at lunchtime, and partner with the Banker in the Classroom Program. This partnership provides each student the opportunity for real live discussions with bank executives and to learn financial and economic lessons for their future. Additionally, students collaborated with the art and music teachers at PFE to create an inspiration mural for the cafeteria, custodial, and delivery staff. This mural not only reached the hearts of each dedicated worker but won recognition from Mississippi for the Arts Alliance Education Association for the 2018-2019 school year.

Our Arts Department provides all K-4 grades students with opportunities to participate regularly in community service projects. For the last four years, the fourth graders have created art banners that are hung at the Biloxi Elks Exceptional Child Special Needs annual Christmas program. All students create miniature art for Veterans Day where each masterpiece is distributed to Veterans at the local Veterans Retirement Home and Keesler Air Force Base. The kindergarteners create and share special handmade valentines to share with the residents at The Pillars, a community retirement home within walking distance of the school. All students participated in creating not one but two editions of a school coloring book for the public called Color the Coast. This was acknowledged by the Mayor of Biloxi where he granted permission to sell these coloring books at the Biloxi Visitors Center. Students also had the unique opportunity to learn about the Australian fires this school year and the devastation that incurred. Letters of appreciation and art work of different animals researched were sent to firefighters and animal rescue workers in the hardest hit areas of Australia. Students at PFE were honored to receive a personal thank you letter from the Australian Fire Chief letting students know the impact of their love and support. The school’s art instruction is definitely visible in the school. Student art work adorns the hallways. Our art teacher not only follows the state curriculum for art instruction, but also incorporates skills from the K-4 core subject areas in student instruction and art displays. Additionally, our art teacher is constantly working on projects that are designed to not only increase student learning of the arts, but to increase their knowledge base of core subjects, such as reading, math, science, and social studies. Students participate in numerous community art contests that have brought numerous awards and recognition for the school.

The school’s physical education department incorporates Project Fit, an outdoor fitness arena and instructional program that fosters being physically fit and making sound nutritional decisions. Our students participate in the Move to Learn program through both the Bower Foundation and Mississippi Department of Education’s Office of Healthy Schools. Annually, we invite the Move to Learn program into our school for a special program to get students excited about physical education. Our students recently participated in the American Heart Association’s Kids Heart Challenge. Our students always look forward to our annual

Super Duper Field Day filled with a wide array of outdoor activities and games to complement our physical education program.

The librarian directs and promotes our Accelerated Reader program with our teachers and students. She supports our teaching staff for the effective implementation of this program. She offers guidance and advice to our students and works to inspire a love for reading and learning. Books are carefully selected with topics of interest appropriate for K-4 students to spotlight a particular artist or to explore a theme.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Monthly data meetings are held with each individual teacher to review a diagnostic inventory for each and every student. Identifying those students of concern is a critical component for addressing areas of deficiency. Before beginning an academic and/or behavioral intervention to address specific concerns, our teams collaborate on ways to tailor Tier I instruction and modify instructional strategies within the classroom. This focused attention allows for the teacher to spend additional time working with the student(s) of concern. Face-to-face remediation is encouraged, teachers keep and maintain a daily log to record specific skills taught and time set aside, and paper/pencil work is turned in to our office to keep with intervention records. After four complete weeks of this concentration, the team has a better understanding of children's particular needs and can base decisions made on this data and observation collected. Most students respond to this form of attention; however, there are some that require the continuation of this Tier I instructional manner accompanied with formal interventions. Another service provided is after-school tutoring in both reading and math which is a program designed and available to our students in kindergarten through fourth grades. Students attend the two hour after-school tutoring sessions twice per week based upon the needs of the individual student. Certified teachers provide this tutoring to students in small groups of approximately six. The classroom teachers in K-4 infused with Library Specials class utilize the Second Step social-emotional program. One lesson is featured per week throughout the school year to teach emotion management and situational awareness. A school counselor works with students who may need additional support and awareness of appropriate social interaction and appropriate emotional responses. These students are primarily identified on our internalizing behavior screening or during our monthly data meetings. Attention is given to six students at a time and groups are staggered based on age and current grade level.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Students above their grade level are provided with a variety of different tools and resources to ensure that they continue to show growth. Many of the computer based programs utilized at Popp's Ferry Elementary, such as iReady, Freckle Math, and Lexia, are prescriptive programs that tailor students' lessons to meet their individual growth potential. Additionally, PFE has built into the master schedule a 45-minute block of time daily which is commonly referred to as "Super Time." This time is utilized by all teachers for both remediation and enrichment. During Super Time, no new instruction is introduced and teachers work closely with those students performing above grade level expectations. Specials teachers, assistant teachers from other grades, and tutors are utilized during this time to work closely with students to ensure continued growth of high performing students. Recently, students who have been performing above grade level in kindergarten and first grade and have mastered their current grade-level objectives, have been given opportunities to work in classrooms at the next grade level to acquire higher level skills. This program has been instrumental in ensuring students don't stagnate, continue to excel, and are provided enriching activities to help continue their above grade level trend.

3c. Special education

Students identified as having a disability, as defined by Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and who possess a current Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), have resource teachers available that provide additional classroom support and individualized specialized support in an effort to improve identified areas of concern. During monthly data meetings, the progress of each student within this subgroup is individually discussed and IEP growth goal monitoring is shared. These students receive academic interventions within

their assigned general education classrooms and with their same-aged peers and are progress monitored with all Tier II academic students. This data is critical for peer comparison, classroom norms, student growth, and Tier I instructional shifts to better meet individualized growth goals.

PFE is home to a unique self-contained K-2 autism program within our district. This self-contained learning environment consists of students at varying ages, performance levels and needs, and requires one-to-one provision. The design of this modified curriculum and instructional activities are adapted and managed to instill age appropriate self-help skills, build expressive and receptive communication, incorporate opportunities to teach and interact with peers appropriately, all while tailoring an academic pathway for each student to grow and learn. Student success is measured far beyond diagnostic and benchmark results; and, this focus on foundation prepares the way to develop engaging activities which allow for independence and expression. The most well-known form of expression for most of these students is found by creating opportunities to receive therapy through our school's art and music programs.

For added support, PFE allocates the use of Title funds to hire an assistant teacher to provide supplemental support to both the special education teachers and students. This assistant works closely with special education inclusion teachers, classroom teachers, and in small groups of students who are in need of additional support. The individual goals of special education students are targeted in these small group settings allowing for more individualized and targeted focus.

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

Students, who have been identified as speaking a second language, are first given a language proficiency screener to determine the students' appropriate language skill level. Utilizing these results along with multiple measures assists our data teams in determining if an appropriate Language Service Plan (LSP) is needed. Once put in place, teachers modify and accommodate individual students' needs for those that fall within this subgroup. Our teachers increase their personal knowledge of each child's culture and utilize different instructional methods to carefully consider the language of instruction. It is an instructional priority at PFE to support the student's home language and culture as teachers and support staff promote the speaking and listening growth of each English Learner (EL) student while targeting small group interventions to build vocabulary, fluency, accuracy, and comprehension. During monthly data meetings, the progress of each student within this subgroup is individually discussed and to evaluate the LSP where changes are made on an as needed basis. These students receive academic interventions within their assigned general education classroom and with their same-aged peers and are progress monitored with all Tier II academic students. This data is critical for peer comparison, classroom norms, student growth, and Tier I instructional shifts to better meet individualized growth goals.

English Learner (EL) students are provided extra support through two EL tutors made available through the use of Title funds. When targeting our EL subgroup of students, the EL tutors work in the classroom on a "push-in" rather than "pull-out" basis with students to ensure that students are present for important classroom instruction. While some additional supports are provided in small group sessions, one of our main goals is to have these students immersed in the classroom whenever possible. They work with students on very specific, targeted skills in both academics and language acquisition.

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

Popp's Ferry Elementary School has a special group of students that come and go rather frequently. The parents of these students are from Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations who are temporarily stationed at Keesler Air Force Base for training. Over the past several years, PFE has worked with approximately eight to ten of these students each year. They come to the United States with severely limited English skills and typically are with us for about four of five months of the school year. We work diligently to help them acquire English language skills and work closely with the Keesler Air Force Base School District Liaison to find tools to help these children adjust to our ways and customs. We have purchased technology devices, such as Amazon Kindles and iPads, to use for both translation and to provide these students with different applications to help meet their unique needs. Tutors work closely with these students as well to expedite their acquisition of the English language both oral and written.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

I belong to a school that believes in me, and I believe in myself!

I can achieve greatness!

I have high expectations for myself!

I will graduate with my peers!

When I believe, I become!

I am Popp’s Ferry Proud!

The preceding Popp’s Ferry Pledge is known by all students. Each day, along with the Pledge of Allegiance, students recite this pledge promising to be all that they can and to actively engage in their own personal learning process. The Popp’s Ferry Pledge became a staple of student commitment to success under the current principal’s leadership and has helped create the culture of being Popp’s Ferry Proud.

The friendly office staff welcome, the beautifully displayed art, the graduation banners hung, happy staff and students, and a clean and beautiful campus are just a few examples of the positive, effective community that lies within the Popp’s Ferry Elementary (PFE) campus. The tone was first established by the Principal wherein his belief and dedication dispersed to teachers and staff. This dedication invokes a degree of loyalty from all; and, the workplace has become inviting for every adult resulting in a classroom that represents success in academics, behavior, social, and emotional domains. This in turn promotes the success of the individual child as all inherit a love and joy for learning. Students are encouraged to attend daily and are made to feel that school is an attractive, safe, and fun place to be. This attractiveness, infused with respect and camaraderie, is the foundation of multiple avenues of PFE’s success.

Students also have ample opportunities to earn “brag tags” which are earned for making good choices, excelling in academics, exhibiting socially acceptable behavior, and displaying good citizenship. Brag tags are displayed by students on chains in their classrooms and periodically around their necks for all to see. The staff is watchful for students deserving of recognition; and, students are genuinely aware as they try to evoke the Popp’s Ferry Proud qualities. Coupled with our Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) system, students consciously make the effort to make good decisions which in turn allows for a campus dedicated to academic and social growth and development of all students.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

At Popp’s Ferry Elementary, we have an expansive array of community involvement. We pride ourselves on creating an inviting atmosphere for all parents and guardians while including local charities, military members, community leaders, and multiple local businesses. Including all families that attend our school is a top priority to ensure we provide an accepting and loving environment. Our award winning National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS) teams up with local charities and food banks to provide services to the community while enriching the lives of the students.

We have a comprehensive initiative at our school called the Family Partnership Program that has brought together multiple diverse populations. Most recently we hosted a Family Partnership night focused on parents and guardians of special needs children. We provided experts to talk and coach parents on how to assist their special needs students at home and at school. Local businesses in the field of expertise joined us in welcoming the parents with gift bags and free items that families could bring home to share. This provided an often forgotten community to feel empowered and supported which in turn reinforces cohesion.

Annually, our school partners with Keesler Air Force Base granting access for our students to visit the base and learn about opportunities in many disciplines for future endeavors. This is a wonderful way for our students to start setting goals for themselves even at an early age. We have a program set up with the leaders of Keesler Air Force Base called Reading Heroes. Every Friday active duty military members volunteer to mentor and read with our students. The teachers specific students who are experiencing academic difficulty or lack the motivation needed to be successful. Many teachers have utilized this program to encourage advanced readers to push themselves harder. We connect each military reader with students who are also needing a strong role model in their lives. In one such case we had a young airman visit a student every week for the year and he eventually came back to attend the student's award's day ceremony. This was significant for both the student and the mentor and the impact was distinctive and personal. Our Reading Heroes also visit our school on fun days and throughout the holidays so the students can associate them with positive moments and truly look up to them for support.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Popp's Ferry Elementary (PFE) entrusts the benefits of planned opportunities for growth and continued excellence by utilizing each employee's knowledge base. Consistent professional development (PD) opportunities are provided for the teachers at PFE to introduce new methods of instruction or refresh set styles. For example, Project Read is a multisensory curriculum utilized for the direct instruction of Phonology and Phonemic Awareness. Training is held with new staff during orientation days set by the district and brief training is provided to established staff to revitalize their instructional approaches. Intel Math sessions are provided for select teachers throughout multiple grades levels to provide various techniques of teaching the key ideas of lessons and standards throughout the K-12 mathematics curriculum. Another example is the relationship that PFE maintains with representatives from support programs, such as Curriculum Associates, in an effort to maintain an understanding of new student data collected and act upon a student's response to instruction.

Teachers are recognized as the professionals that they are and are encouraged to seek out new and innovative practices for the classroom. The administrative staff are supportive of teacher efforts to employ best practices in the classroom without fear of failure. This supportive nature has helped create an atmosphere of trust amongst the staff to think outside the box as they look for ways to enhance classroom instruction.

Moreover, grade level teacher teams are provided the opportunity for full-day collaborative planning once a term. During this time, principals work with teachers to create the culture of learning shared amongst the team as they plan for the upcoming term. As an added bonus, principal activity funds are used to provide breakfast and lunch for teachers and support personnel to provide an additional boost of morale and to motivate productivity. This collaboration allows for better understanding of the progression of skills through the grade levels, share observed universal skill deficits, and plan for misconceptions and misunderstandings which can affect student thinking and share ways to overcome them. On-site Instructional Coaches are available to further assist in planning and improving Tier I instruction and management.

Monthly recognition of employee "Pop Stars" who are the teachers and support staff honored for doing an excellent job or exceeding what is generally expected are a staple of our culture of recognition. This acknowledgement is essential in maintaining employee satisfaction and loyalty. Monthly staff birthdays and individual success are also celebrated and shared.

4. School Leadership:

The servant style leadership philosophy of the principal is one of the aspects which has allowed the school to significantly grow over the past several years. School administrators practice the belief that they are here to support the teachers and provide tools which allow them to excel in the classroom. They work with Popp's Ferry's School Leadership Team (SLT) offering invaluable support and input for the school. Our SLT is composed of one teacher from each grade level and departmental teams. The team meets monthly to review curriculum, finances, and school goals. Occasionally, SLT meetings are conducted in a manner to include parents, students, and community members. Team members work collaboratively to plan special

events and programs and evaluate past events to make adjustments for future events. Teacher input is quickly acted upon by the principal which lets teachers know that their contributions are valued and of significance.

Our Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) works with the principal to outline projects and coordinate events for the school. Popp's Ferry Elementary is fortunate to have a high level of parental involvement and positive parent leadership which are indispensable to our success as a school. The role of the principal is truly vital as he works diligently to be the instructional leader. He drives the instructional program daily through classroom observations, counseling with students, and meeting with teachers on a regular basis to review data and discuss progress of students while simultaneously making suggestions for improved progress. The principal and/or assistant principal make every effort to participate on a regular basis in weekly team meetings with each grade level. They offer support as teachers work together to plan for student instruction.

Each year a School Needs Assessment is conducted through a survey to all stakeholders. The survey addresses key components of the school which include instruction, culture, discipline, and support. Data is then used by school leadership to reflect on each area of our school and how we can work to provide the best school possible for our students, staff, parents, and the community. An open door policy by the principal and assistant principal for all stakeholders works well as all understand that the administrative team is genuinely concerned and willing to listen to any concerns that may be present. Students, parents, and the local community are our "customers" and it is our goal to meet their needs whenever possible. Whether it is with students, parents, or teachers the principal demonstrates a caring and compassionate commitment to the job and his belief that all students can and will learn. The principal helps guide the entire school community toward its ultimate goal of student success.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

While many practices implemented at Popp's Ferry Elementary School have profoundly impacted both academics and the overall atmosphere, the single most important factor has been the approach and the lengths we have taken to instill in each student a strong belief in personal success. This success takes on many forms and is attainable for students of all intellectual and emotional capabilities. Once this belief system was entrenched in the minds of students, staff, parents, and our community, the evidence manifested in student achievement and overall morale. Students are constantly told that their mindset is the single most important factor not only in school but life in general. The Popp's Ferry Pledge recited daily and displayed throughout our campus is a constant reminder to students that simply believing in oneself and putting forth your best effort are tools that will allow you to excel in life.

We pride ourselves in acknowledging and celebrating the many achievements and successes of our students; however, it was remarkable the number of perfect scores our students attained on state reading and math assessments throughout the spring 2019 semester. In the fall of 2019, Popp's Ferry introduced the first elementary Hall of Fame in its history. In observance of the many exceptional achievements, our school held a banquet to commemorate each student in conjunction with an extravagant awards presentation. Students were individually called to the stage and recognized in front of a sizable assembly made up of parents, educators, Biloxi School Board members, Mayor of Biloxi, family, and friends. Each student received certificates, trophies, yard signs, and gift bags for their accomplishments. Parents received "Proud Parent of a Biloxi Academic Superstar" buttons to be worn proudly. Teachers were also recognized and received trophies in acknowledgement of their hard work and dedication put forth to prepare each student. Proudly, a banner with each student's picture is displayed in the main hallway and will remain for years to come.

Instilling and promoting a student's state of mind for success not only prepares them for the challenges that they may face throughout their academic career it creates a strong foundation for them as they navigate through life. Becoming Popp's Ferry Proud has taught our students to appreciate and take pride in each personal accomplishment, and to believe in his or her sense of belonging within their community.