

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

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

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

School Mailing Address 1212 East Baker Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Laramie State WY Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 82072-2959

County Albany County

Telephone (307) 721-4446 Fax (307) 721-4497

Web site/URL https://www.acsd1.org/ses/ E-mail hmoro@acsd1.org

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Jubal Yennie E-mail jyennie@acsd1.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Albany County School District #1 Tel. (307) 721-4400

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Janice Marshall
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

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

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 8 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 2 High schools
 - 1 K-12 schools
- 12 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	25	13	38
1	19	17	36
2	32	12	44
3	23	20	43
4	21	19	40
5	22	16	38
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	142	97	239

*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):
- 3.3 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3.3 % Asian
 - 2.9 % Black or African American
 - 21 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 68.2 % White
 - 1.3 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 17%

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

The mobility rate at Slade Elementary School is 17%. There are three main factors that contribute to our mobility rate. The first factor is the amount of low-income housing in our boundary area including mobile home parks, motels, a campground, and low-rent apartment buildings. A second factor is our connection to the University of Wyoming and student housing. This connection impacts our mobility in two ways. One impact is families attending the university often have younger students so when the parents graduate, the families move out of our boundary area. Another impact in connection with the university is short-term visiting students and professors. This group of families is often in our school for less than one school year. A final overall factor contributing to our mobility rate is the lack housing growth in our boundary area. Families in starter homes often buy their next house outside of our boundary area where more options are available.

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	23
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year	17
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	40
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018	241
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.17
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	17

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

Slade Elementary has four non-English languages represented in our school: Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Amharic.

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 10 %
25 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 50 %

Total number students who qualify: 119

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %

41 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>4</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>7</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>6</u> Developmental Delay | <u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>4</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>21</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</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: 12

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	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	13
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	8
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 17:1

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yes No

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

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

The mission of Slade Elementary School is to ensure high levels of learning for all students.

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

Located on the northern edge of the city of Laramie, Wyoming, just blocks from the beautiful University of Wyoming campus, Slade Elementary School serves 273 learners; including 34 students in our TANF funded preschool program. Our students are represented by 160 males and 113 females with a reported ethnicity of 68.2% white, 21% Hispanic, 3.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native 2.9% African American, and 1.3% who identify as two or more races. Approximately 50% of the student population qualify for free or reduced lunch, 17% receive special education services as Slade hosts one of the district's Behavior Support classrooms, and 10.5% receive English Language services. The mobility rate at Slade Elementary school is 17%. But this is just one set of numbers.

The motto of Slade Elementary School is “Believe to Achieve.” Our belief in teachers, students, and their families creates a sense of community at Slade in which members feel respected, empowered, and passionate about building on our strengths to continually improve. Slade leaders and learners are a team of risk-takers who learn from failures, get competitive over successes, and expect the best from everyone. This is what it means to be a Slade Eagle.

A key strategy for creating and sustaining a positive learning community at Slade Elementary is the belief that all students will learn at high levels. Our school focuses on continued improvement through building strong relationships, growing the mindset that all members are learners, and challenging the status quo through a willingness to celebrate what is successful and respond when we are not getting the results we expect. This collective effort resulted in a state performance rating of an “Exceeding Expectations” school for five out of the past six years, and one of the highest student mean growth percentiles in the state of Wyoming for 2019.

A second key strategy utilized at Slade Elementary School is the application of a shared leadership model that develops the strengths of our staff members, cultivates the learning of teachers, staff, students, and families, and promotes high expectations for all community members. The philosophy of shared responsibility has filtered to our students and families through the use of goal setting, a common language that is positive, and feedback that is focused on improvement and future success. An example of this is represented in an email I received from a previous student’s family during parent-teacher conference sessions this year. It stated:

"[Our son] is flourishing and really enjoying his time in middle school, and last night I was thinking about how his current success was so well set up by Slade Elementary School. You and your teachers and staff have so carefully and consistently created an environment of learning and growth. That left [our son] believing that everyone from the lunch room staff, to administrators, is interested in his well-rounded education, while at the same time encouraging his understanding that ultimately what he gets out of school, is up to him. The environment you have created has set him up for success, and I appreciate that very much. I am particularly pleased by the graduated level of responsibility and the focus on that, and on organization that was afforded him by the way [your teachers] run their classrooms."

Finally, Slade Elementary School is grounded in the practice of being a Professional Learning Community (PLC) that guarantees access to grade level instruction for all students through a multi-level service of delivery model. Based on individual student needs, Slade teachers work to provide instruction in the regular education classroom environment, at times, utilizing a co-teaching model, small group interventions, and individual instruction with our Title I and Special Education teachers. Our school has also employed our Specialists teachers (art, counselor, librarian, music, and PE teachers) to create enrichment opportunities for students and extended planning times for teachers. This allows for a Maker Space in our Library, meaningful work jobs throughout the school, and school-wide behavior incentives to promote positive choice and celebrate success.

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

Slade Elementary School believes at its core that all students can learn at high levels. This belief is put into practice through our work in Professional Learning Communities. Each grade level team maximizes the standards that our school district has determined to be essential, as mapped out on a nine-week quarter system for each core content area.

Using district adopted, grade level program materials, teams determine the learning goals and objectives of weekly lessons and plan activities and learning around those goals. Together, common formative and summative assessments are created with the purpose of defining what mastery of the skill or strategy looks like and how the team will know if a student understands and meets the goals.

Within these team discussions, supports, accommodations, and enrichments are mapped out for students with the intention of creating access to grade level learning for all students and providing extension for students who need more. Data from common formative and summative assessments are analyzed during team meetings and used to make informed decisions about next steps for instruction in the classroom, as well as small groups and individualized learning. This approach, in combination with universal screening conducted three times a year, has allowed Slade to create a tiers of service delivery model across each classroom and grade level to ensure equity of access to all students.

Another area our school has coalesced on is the use of the explicit instruction model. Employing the common approach of “I do, we do, you do” creates the routines for teachers and students. The practice of modeling learning, expectations, and criteria for success, then working together to practice skills and strategies with feedback, and finally, engaging students in a gradual release to individual practice, benefits our entire school system.

1b. Reading/English language arts

Slade Elementary School utilizes the Great Minds Wit & Wisdom English Language Arts program materials throughout our school as the content of learning at each grade level. Grade level PLC teams, based on clearly defined learning goals, assessment data, and the needs of the students in their classrooms, make informed decisions to determine how to best utilize the program materials to create the curriculum and pacing guide our students will have guaranteed access to at each grade level.

Our school has worked each year to intentionally create a schedule that provides large blocks of instructional time designated for ELA instruction to connect reading and writing. Our schedule also allows for building-wide access to tiered instructional time for all students, regardless of their current level of learning. In order to make this time successful and efficient, PLC teams determine the focus of lessons and how program materials might be adjusted to promote access and generalizability across grade levels and task types. A goal of our school is to build a common language and vocabulary around ELA instruction to ensure students can access the content and have a strategy to problem-solve different text types and writing prompts as they build knowledge of reading and writing skills and strategies.

A change Slade implemented over the past two years is an emphasis on getting students into books more independently, in order to foster a love of reading. In kindergarten through 2nd grade our focus is on finding a balance during small group instruction between reading at a student’s “just right” level and providing skill and strategy practice to increase a student’s access to grade level text. In 3rd through 5th grade, our reading instruction focuses more on comprehension and understanding the essential elements of narrative and information text types. We have experienced positive trends in our data that indicate this approach is having an impact.

As noted above, common formative and summative assessments also inform the teaching and learning at Slade. A common phrase you may hear during a meeting is, "We need to slow down to go fast." In other words, we need to ensure students have a solid understanding of a concept before we layer on the next step. Along with this approach, common assessments include spaced practice over the school year to ensure students are maintaining previously taught and mastered skills and strategies.

As a school we embrace the mistakes that allow learning to take place, make adjustments as needed, and celebrate successes at each step along this path.

1c. Mathematics

Slade Elementary School utilizes the scope and sequence of Origo Stepping Stones program materials for mathematics instruction in conjunction with a pacing guide to ensure teaching and mastery of essential learning targets. The main approach of our program materials is to build conceptual knowledge of number sense and operations through a variety of concrete and representative strategies or models before applying this knowledge to bare numbers.

A second approach to mathematics instruction is the use of dialog and conversation to talk through key strategies and mathematical concepts with students. Students often model their thinking and explain their problem-solving approach with other students in partnerships or to the whole class as an example of one way to solve a problem. Teachers help to focus the conversation on effective and efficient strategy use as students build their mathematical understanding.

Finally, through the use of common formative and summative assessments, as well as cyclical practice of essential standards and concepts that are embedded in the daily instruction, mastery of critical concepts is determined. Small group and individual instruction is provided to students using strategies and frameworks from Add+Vantage training and our Learning in Number Framework book study.

1d. Science

Slade Elementary School is following the lead of our district Science committee in which we have five members from our school. This committee is working to determine essential standards and is overseeing the implementation of an agreed-upon science unit at each grade level during the 2019-20 school year. At this time, we do not have a set curriculum or specific program materials. Instead, we utilize a variety of texts, experiences, and resources.

Specifically, at Slade, we have a designated Science time built into each grade level schedule. PLC teams work to create lessons and experiences that practice and reinforce critical science concepts. The main focus is on identifying a question or problem, creating a plan, implementing the plan, making adjustments to the plan, and drawing conclusions for next steps and corrections. Additionally, some science topics are integrated into grade level Wit & Wisdom modules.

This core curriculum area is in transition as our school, district, and state change over to the Next Generation Science Standards as adopted by the state of Wyoming.

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

Slade Elementary School approaches Social Studies instruction through the modules of our English Language Arts program, Wit & Wisdom. Specific units of instruction include, America: Then and Now, Civil Rights, Immigration, the Revolutionary War and Civil War. Instruction for these units is rooted in informational text and historical fiction. Teachers incorporate writing, speaking, and listening standards into instruction to promote understanding and demonstration of knowledge of this important historical content.

1f. For secondary schools:

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

Slade Elementary School hosts a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF, funded preschool program for 34 students. Our preschool program is not tied to the district learning framework, curriculum expectations, or assessment procedures. Our preschool is not included in this application process.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Slade is very fortunate to have an excellent team of specialists who not only are masters of their own craft, but willing and able to work as a team to promote the whole child. In an effort to encourage and build problem-solving skills in students, our team works to create "extra specials time," two 30-minute chunks of time within the school day to provide extension in each performing arts area, in addition to the hour students engage each week in Art, Guidance, Music, Library/media, and PE. The team also created a mindfulness room which is utilized by our PE teacher, Librarian, and Counselor to teach calm-down and coping strategies. Finally, it was essential that the problem-solving process be built into the different specialist areas to help heighten students' abilities to try, fail, and persevere through the trial and error progression that would eventually lead students to success.

To implement this idea, our team of specialists met to make agreements about what the team could offer all students. The next step was to manipulate the school-wide schedule to include additional blocks of time to allow for enrichment and collaboration. With timing established, the team got creative with a space in our school by turning it into a mindfulness/yoga area. The teachers completed an online training and secured resources like blankets, music, and yoga exercises to prepare for implementation.

The Slade Librarian rearranged the library space to include a maker-space complete with all types of recycled materials, electronic devices, and challenges for young builders. Our Counselor introduced a new bullying prevention program that focuses on recognizing, reporting, and refusing bullying along with extended practice of the essential social skills our school teaches to all students. Slade's art teacher extended her partnership with the University of Wyoming Art Museum to provide fieldtrips to the art museum for artist studies and an extension of her classroom. Our PE teacher created a yoga and American Ninja Warrior unit to promote well-being and overcoming challenges. Finally, our music teacher utilizes her time for extended practice with instruments, including the purchase of 25 ukuleles.

The results we have experienced over the last few years include an increase in positive relationships and connections between students and our team of specialists. This is due, in part, to the extended time and extension students are experiencing in a challenging and innovative environment. Another impact rethinking specials time has had on our school is to provide an additional hour of planning for grade-level teachers, which provides more flexibility in our schedule to include key special education and Title I teachers in PLC teams.

3. Academic Supports:

3a. Students performing below grade level

Slade Elementary School's tiered approach to instruction puts access to grade level standards at the fingertips of all students. Students who are performing below grade level, as measured by universal screening, common formative, and state assessments, are provided additional instruction and support by highly qualified teachers (grade level, Title I, and/or special education) in Tier 2 or Tier 3 instructional settings.

Our Tier 2 setting is focused on providing pre-teaching, re-teaching, or small group instruction to help ensure that a student continues to access grade level instruction successfully. Often this looks like an intentional rotation of critical skills and strategies to ensure spaced practice and maintenance of previous learning. Tier 2 instruction can also take the form of additional practice or pre-taught vocabulary and background information to provide a context for new learning and opportunities for connections.

Tier 3 services are more intensive and often provided during one-on-one or very small group instruction. Goals and learning targets are focused on filling in gaps of previous learning. This type of instruction is very individualized and requires multiple opportunities to respond. The instruction is paced so a student can make up critical skills while also connecting Tier 3 learning to grade level learning.

Students who demonstrate the most need in our school system receive grade level (Tier 1), Tier 2, and Tier 3 instruction within designated time frames of the school day. This includes our students who qualify for special education and English Language services.

3b. Students performing above grade level

Students who are performing above grade level also have access to tiered services and instruction as described above. The school schedule is built with large chunks of time for English Language Arts and Mathematics instruction. Teachers use these time blocks to chunk instruction which allows for tiered services to flow into the classroom, and time for students to participate in short term small grouping based on the current learning target.

Also built into the schedule are intervention times of 30 minutes so students can receive instruction at their level. For students who are working above grade level, this is an opportunity to go deeper into a content area, read a more advanced text, or apply mathematical learning to larger numbers or more advanced problem solving.

3c. Special education

For students who qualify for special education services, Slade utilizes the tiered system of instruction. This may mean for a student who has an Individualized Learning Plan that all three tiers of service are utilized, along with instruction in a special educational setting. This setting takes multiple forms including targeted co-teaching, in-classroom small groups, pull-out small groups, and one-on-one instruction from a special education teacher.

Our team always follows IEP requirements for goals, services, and times but is very flexible with how services are delivered and thoughtful about which environment makes the most sense for instruction.

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

Slade Elementary School is very fortunate to work with a half-time teacher who specializes in serving our students who are English Language Learners. In keeping with our belief that all students can learn at high levels, our ELL teacher works with grade level, Title I, and special education teachers to set targeted goals for vocabulary and language acquisition. Slade utilizes the three tiers of instruction to create individual learning for all students.

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

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

Our belief in all community members as learners is one of the corner posts of Slade Elementary School. We focus time and energy on cultivating and maintaining positive relationships while furthering a growth mindset in all learners. Together these elements work to create a system that promotes risk-taking and learning from mistakes. We have changed the conversation in our school to focus on what we must do to get better, specifically, what is currently working well and what we must change. This places student and adult learning at the heart of our school.

To monitor and advance our productive climate, we have worked diligently to build high-functioning, collaborative teams that are dedicated to Leadership, Positive Behavior Supports, and Community Involvement. Our school provides resources and training that is ongoing and focused to continue the important work of building a strong foundation with high expectations for learning and success. This includes our PTA purchasing t-shirts for all students to promote a culture of togetherness.

To engage and motivate students, our school created Eagle Pride guidelines for success. Eagle Pride stands for having a positive attitude, showing respect and safety, demonstrating individual responsibility, being a dependable citizen, and giving effort. With student input, our teams created explicit lesson plans and opportunities to practice these skills; pausing to celebrate students each month who exemplify these characteristics. Twice a year, our school runs behavior incentives for school-wide success creating opportunities to celebrate. This March our students earned a bowling party after working for weeks to earn Pride tickets based on positive behaviors.

To honor achievement and growth, Slade recognizes students during themed assemblies. This year we celebrated with our school's achievement of exceeding expectations on the state report card by throwing a "blue party." We have also hosted assemblies to honor donations to and from our community, to celebrate perseverance, growth mindsets, and mindfulness, and to recognize milestones including student and teacher awards and a surprise 90th birthday celebration for our foster grandparent.

Finally, we work with our students and families to set positive expectations through goal setting and celebrating success. This includes modeling active problem-solving and teamwork to improve interactions and plan for success in the future.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Our school involves families and community members in supporting student achievement at the start of every school year by hosting a Meet your Teacher Open House. This event kick starts our school year on a positive note, creating an open communication between school and home. We also invite a variety of community service organizations to this event to build relationships and provide opportunities for families outside of the school.

In addition to our kick-off event, we host school-wide Family Nights each month to bring families and the community together in celebration, learning, and unity. Our Parent Involvement Committee, in conjunction with our Parent Teacher Association, plans each event with a clear purpose. We provide food, a positive environment, and door prizes that support our theme and purpose for the evening. A few examples from this school year include Celebrating Success: The State of our School Address in September, Media Literacy Night in November, and Holiday Traditions Night in December.

At each grade level, families are invited into the classrooms multiple times a year to participate in celebrations and honor student work and accomplishments. While these presentations vary from grade level to grade level, the purpose is the same; how do we involve families in the academic achievements of their children? A second layer of community involvement comes in the form of a service learning project at each grade level. During monthly recognition ceremonies, grade levels present their project to the school. Some

example of service learning projects include: Halloween candy donations to the Wyoming National Guard, creating a sensory path on the playground, reading books with seniors at a local senior center, and collecting donations for our local interfaith chapter.

At the individual level, every adult in our school works to build personal connections with families. Through phone calls, personal notes, and emails we work tirelessly to stay connected at the family level. We work collaboratively to ensure positive connections and team with families that need extra compassion and assistance.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Six years ago, our school embarked on a journey to find time. We sought more time for in-depth learning and extended professional development to create a cohesive and aligned curriculum that would lead to increased student engagement and achievement. What we found is that teachers need time for complex conversations and thoughtful planning free of distractions and day-to-day routines.

Using *Professional Learning Communities at Work* by Richard and Rebecca DuFour and *Focus* by Mike Schmoker, our lead team designed a pilot three-day Summer Institute which took place three weeks after school released for the summer. Timing was essential because teachers needed a few weeks to begin their summer activities and the district summer school dates had already been set. The leadership team spent the spring months talking with teachers about the idea of Summer Institute; promoting the benefits of working together as a school to create a solid system for evaluating our current needs and the future changes of what was then, the new Common Core State Standards document.

During our first Summer Institute, all of our teachers attended and worked for four hours each morning for three days. We read through each standard, prioritized its importance at each grade level and then aligned our new curriculum map with our current programs. The level of focus we were afforded made this time extremely productive and critical in providing teachers clarity of content and expectations across our school.

The next summer we focused on aligning our Math standards across the school; prioritizing when standards would occur and how standards related to each other. Some standards were designated as critical, which meant they were essential for all students to master at the grade level. These standards would become the focus of our differentiated intervention time. The remaining standards would be taught during core instruction times but would not be a focus of intervention. This paved the way for creating common assessments at each grade level.

During our third Summer Institute, teachers worked on polishing common assessments, checking our prioritization of standards based on the data from the school year, and made adjustments to grade level and school-wide alignment of curriculum. Grade level PLC teams planned an in-depth, agreed-upon first nine weeks unit based on the standards.

Our fourth Summer Institute focused on understanding new ELA program materials to set learning goals and create a pacing guide for implementation. Grade level PLC teams prioritized essential standards and mapped out action plans to ensure students would understand the new content while mastering elevated expectations without previous exposure to the materials. Interventionists (Title I and Special Education) worked alongside grade level teams to create a shared understanding of expectations and to design instruction to meet student needs.

For the fifth Slade Summer Institute, the focus was on using knowledge gained from the implementation year of new ELA program materials to create shorter instructional units to meet short term goals that led to the final quarter expectations for students. Teams reworked pacing guides, altered common assessments and worked to create a more consistent and common language for use across grade levels. Teams also evaluated mathematical units of instruction to adjust for pacing, needs of upcoming learners, and effectiveness of instructional practices.

This past summer Slade was unable to run our annual Summer Institute due to time constraints. However,
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this was a valuable learning experience for the team. In trying to replicate the learning that takes place during Summer Institute, our belief in needing the time and space to work together prior to school starting was reinforced. We are already planning for the summer of 2020.

The most exciting result of this work is in the day-to-day success stories of our students. These successes are also reflected in our state school Performance Ratings. For five out of the last six years, Slade Elementary has been rated an Exceeding Expectations school. For the 2018-19 school year, Slade students had one of the highest mean growth percentiles in the state of Wyoming paired with an achievement rate of 75% in combined math and ELA. Students achieved, and achieved well, based on the changes we made in our thinking and implementation of a guaranteed curriculum for all. A second benefit of this effort was a high level of collaboration at our school. Teachers now work differently together and have a better understanding of what the other grade level teams expect from students. We now, more than ever, value the time we have to work together and have raised our collective efficacy as a school.

4. School Leadership:

Slade Elementary School strives for a shared leadership model in our school. The principal works closely with district and school committees made up of representative groups of teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, and students focused on specific outcomes. The committees include leadership, positive behavior supports, community involvement, the Parent Teacher Association, and our student council. Each of these teams operates within a set of norms and with a clear purpose to make informed and collaborative decisions for our school.

Input for decision making is sought out in advance of and during problem-solving sessions as much as possible. Members of our school community know they have a voice and utilize communication channels to share their ideas. The process for final decisions is presented up front so that everyone is aware of the procedures and policies that impact decisions. When mistakes are made or information is unclear, there is a chance to debrief and make changes as needed.

Each grade level team also takes an active role in facilitated professional learning community meeting twice a week for ELA and Math. Based on the need of students at each grade level, a special education, Title I, or ELL teacher may also be present. The grade level PLC teams are leaders in curriculum and instruction and provide input and insight into school level system decisions.

Professional development is an on-going learning tool utilized during staff development days, staff meetings, PLC meetings, and student needs. Guidance for professional development is set by the school district with other opportunities for site-specific learning to take place. An example of Slade's site-specific learning is referenced in the professional culture section below.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

At Slade Elementary School a question you will often hear from students and teachers is, "Why?"; and that is a good thing. At all levels of our school, people are working with intention and purpose toward common learning goals and making an impact on student success. This, combined with our belief that all students can achieve at high levels of learning, has created a strong level of collective teacher efficacy and is producing positive results for Slade.

The idea of focusing on a few initiatives and implementing each with intention began with our school collectively identifying the kind of learning community we wanted to be. Through this vision, the question of why became clearer and the impact of knowing our purpose began to spread to all aspects of our school. When planning professional development for teachers, the learning always begins with a rationale and connection to previous work. When teachers are working in a PLC team, the facilitation and decision-making focuses on why the unit, lesson, and activity meet our targeted learning objectives. And if the answer is, that "it doesn't," then the team works to create or find a more effective plan. Students are also engaged in the intentionality of knowing the purpose of what they are learning. Teachers actively communicate learning targets and the steps students need to find success. Through common formative assessments and feedback cycles, students are also clear on what skills and strategies they are successful with and what actions must be taken to improve. This thread of intention runs throughout our school.

The results Slade has experienced through deliberate focus on a rationale for learning and decision-making has been a shift to a culture of second chances, deep learning through mistakes, and an overall demonstration of growth over time. This is evidenced in our weekly PLC meetings through grade level goal setting, checks for understanding, and continual attention to what works. As a school we have also experienced high growth rates for students in every achievement level band as designated on WY-TOPP (below, basic, proficient, and advanced). A final result of our work is a community that people want to be a part of. Our students, families, and staff know they are in a place that cares.