U.S. Department of Education
2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

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

Name of Principal <u>Mrs. Nicole C. McChesney</u>
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name <u>South Central Calhoun Elementary School</u>
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address <u>330 Brower Street</u>
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City <u>Rockwell City</u>   State <u>IA</u>   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) <u>50579-1709</u>

County <u>Calhoun</u>   State School Code Number* <u>5625</u>

Telephone <u>712-297-8621</u>   Fax <u>712-297-7181</u>

Web site/URL <u>http://www.scc.k12.ia.us</u>   E-mail <u>nmcchesney@scc.k12.ia.us</u>

Twitter Handle _____   Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/pages/South-Central-Calhoun-Elementary/155296367927327   Google+ _____

YouTube/URL _____   Blog _____   Other Social Media Link _____

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

_____Date_____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent* <u>Mr. Jeff Kruse</u>   E-mail: <u>jkruse@scc.k12.ia.us</u>
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name <u>South Central Calhoun Community Schools</u>   Tel.   712-297-7341

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

_____Date_____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson <u>Mr. Michael Sexton</u>
(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 that it is accurate.

_____Date_____

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

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

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

Include this page in the school's application as page 2.

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, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made its Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

3. To meet final eligibility, a public school must meet the state's AMOs or AYP requirements in the 2013-2014 school year and be certified by the state representative. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2008 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.

6. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, or 2013.

7. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award if irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state.

8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

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

1. Number of schools in the district   <u>1</u> Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   <u>1</u> Middle/Junior high schools
                                                <u>1</u> High schools
                                                <u>0</u> K-12 schools

                                                <u>3</u> TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)
2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [ ] Urban or large central city
   [ ] Suburban with characteristics typical of an urban area
   [ ] Suburban
   [ ] Small city or town in a rural area
   [X] Rural

3. <u>12</u> Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

4. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	36	31	67
K	28	25	53
1	26	30	56
2	30	40	70
3	36	31	67
4	0	0	0
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	0	0	0
Total Students	156	157	313

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
0 % Asian
0 % Black or African American
2 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
96 % White
2 % 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.)

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2012 - 2013 year: 10%

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 *to* the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the school year	20
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2012 until the end of the 2012-2013 school year	12
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	32
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	324
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.099
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	10

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0 %
0 Total number ELL

Number of non-English languages represented: 0
Specify non-English languages:

8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 46 %

Total number students who qualify: 117

If this method is not an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

9. Students receiving special education services: 6 %

    20 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 categories.

    0 Autism   0 Orthopedic Impairment
    0 Deafness   0 Other Health Impaired
    0 Deaf-Blindness   0 Specific Learning Disability
    0 Emotional Disturbance   0 Speech or Language Impairment
    0 Hearing Impairment   0 Traumatic Brain Injury
    0 Mental Retardation   0 Visual Impairment Including Blindness
    0 Multiple Disabilities   0 Developmentally Delayed

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

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers	16
Resource teachers/specialists e.g., reading, math, science, special education, enrichment, technology, art, music, physical education, etc.	8
Paraprofessionals	15
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

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

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

Required Information	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools)**
    Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2013

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 <u>X</u>

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

PART III – SUMMARY

South Central Calhoun (SCC) Elementary serves the preschool- 3rd grade students of the Rockwell City-Lytton and Southern Cal School Districts under a whole-grade sharing agreement. As a combined district, SCC covers 435 square miles and enrolls 911 students, 315 of whom attend the elementary.

Our rural communities strongly value education and support our school even during recent years of declining enrollment. Employment opportunities are fairly limited to farming and blue collar jobs, but families are attracted to the quality of life here. Crime is low and a sense of belonging is high. Many community organizations operate to provide opportunities for our citizens.

The students at our school are diverse in terms of economics and abilities, but they are very connected to the community, school, and each other. They are eager learners and active in school and community activities. From their first year in preschool, our students learn the expectations for respectful, responsible, and caring behavior, and they demonstrate these character traits reliably.

The mission statement of SCC Elementary is, "To meet the physical, social, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual needs of every child, every day." This mission is the driving force for every teacher, bus driver, cook, custodian, and support staff. In fulfilling it, we've accomplished our vision: "To be a school where staff and students excel and parents and community care." To be sure, our students excel both academically and in character. Our teachers excel at improving student achievement and in creating a caring environment. Our parents and community care about achievement student data and the needs of individual students.

Our school, as well as our community, has a long tradition of pride. From the well-maintained building and grounds to the student art work displayed in the hallways, from the Behavior Honor Roll published in the newspaper to the student achievement graphs displayed at Board meetings, our stakeholders take both ownership and pride in what happens at SCC Elementary. A continuous cycle of setting goals and celebrating successes is the culture of our school.

Whole-grade sharing, beginning in 2012, was an important milestone for our school. Several years of declining enrollment had resulted in decreased revenue. In order to maintain quality programs, RC-L and Southern Cal began the sharing process as a step toward consolidation. Changing from a PK-6 to a PK-3 building in 2012 allowed us to hone our focus on early childhood. Multiple sections at each grade-level facilitated richer collaboration among teachers. Sharing also allowed us to maintain and expand programs like visual/performing arts, Reading Recovery, and Title I Math.

Our building's biggest strength is its professional, caring staff. The 35 full-time teachers are all highly-qualified and experienced. While there is little turn-over, there is not stagnation. All teachers are dedicated to life-long learning, actively seeking new theories and practices for improved teaching and learning. In addition, we have an amazing cadre of paraprofessionals who support teachers and students. Because of them, students are taught in smaller groups and receive more individualized, targeted instruction and personal attention. The safe, nurturing, and challenging environment that the staff has created is foundational to the academic success of our school.

A track record of academic excellence, as measured by standardized test scores, is only one of our school's major accomplishments. We've aligned the curriculum, staff, and professional development of two previously separate schools. We've established a high-quality preschool where all children, including Head Start and special needs kids, learn together in a developmentally appropriate environment. We've developed a multi-tiered system of interventions for academic and behavioral deficits. An after-school reading program, staffed by volunteer senior citizens, has been operating for five years. A summer school program has been started to meet the needs of at-risk students. We've created opportunities for community connections through partnerships like the Foster Grandparent program at a local nursing home. Through all of the changes and challenges of the past few years, our school has adapted and thrived, a notable example

of what can be accomplished when the community and educators work together.

SCC Elementary is worthy of National Blue Ribbon not just because of what we have done but also because of what we will do.   We will never be satisfied with our accomplishments but will keep working to improve teaching and learning. Currently, we are assessing needs and developing goals and professional development plans for the 2014-15 school year. We've invited a consultant to evaluate the safety and security of our building, and we'll be acting on those recommendations. Our preschool teachers have begun working toward a four-star rating on the Quality Rating System. National Blue Ribbon recognition would be a great source of pride and affirmation for our students, staff, and community. It would not, however, be a point of arrival but rather a checkpoint on the journey of continuous improvement.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

a) Our school uses "Iowa Assessments" as our standardized test for accountability to the State. The three levels of performance are non-proficient, proficient, and advanced. For mid-year testing at grade three, non-proficiency in mathematics is defined as a standard score between 125-172, proficiency as 173-197, and advanced as greater than 197. For mid-year testing at grade three, non-proficiency in reading is defined as a standard score between 125-169, proficiency as 170-208, and advanced as greater than 208.

Beginning in 2001, the Iowa Department of Education set a trajectory of annual targets for each individual school. Because RC-L and Southern Cal were and are still operating as separate districts, data for the combined SCC district are not available. Only data from the RC-L school is addressed in this application.

Over the past five years, our school's 3rd grade proficiency rate in math has been at or above (by 5-17%) the State's yearly target on our trajectory. Our school's 3rd grade proficiency rate for reading has been at or above (by 2-17%) the State trajectory for four of the last five years.

The State's data warehouse, EdInsight, provides for additional comparisons. Each of the past five years, our 3rd grade math proficiency rate has been 6-14% above the average for other schools in our Area Education Agency (AEA) and 8-12% above the State average. Our 3rd grade reading proficiency rate has been 11-17% above other AEA schools and 12-17% higher than the State.

Although SCC Elementary has consistently met or exceeded State standards, our District standards are for 100% proficiency for all students and >25% of students scoring at the advanced level in both reading and math. We have been able to achieve <10% non-proficient, with few exceptions, and we have met the standard for the percentage of advanced students.

b) With the relatively few number of students tested per grade level, our scores are particularly susceptible to variances in groups of students. While this makes it more difficult to draw valid generalizations, our data tables do indicate three significant trends.

First, our scores are consistently high in comparison to State and AEA averages with about 90% of our students at or above the proficiency mark and about 25% at the advanced level. While changes of 1-3% are not significant trends, the dip in 6% that occurred in reading between 2012 and 2013 warrants additional analysis. Most likely, it results from a combination of student factors, the start of whole-grade sharing, a stronger focus on math, and revisions to Iowa Core. There is also a trend of declining scores at the 5th-6th grade levels, but with these grades now at the middle school, the efforts to address the trend are beyond the scope of this application.

Second, it can be noted that students who qualified for free/reduced meals (FRL) were less likely to be proficient than students of higher economic status. This was particularly true from 2008-2010. To address this trend, our staff studied DuFour's book WHATEVER IT TAKES and established a "no-excuses" philosophy for closing the gap regardless of student background. We created a response to intervention (RTI) system for all students. We dug into our data, created multi-leveled interventions, and established protocols for progress monitoring. The results were measurable, and by 2011-2012, there was no gap between students who did and did not qualify for FRL. Our system of RTI will continue to provide after-school and summer school options (including transportation) for non-proficient students at no cost to families. We are also pleased that EdInsight data for the past five years indicate that our 3rd grade FRL students achieved higher than both AEA and State averages in math and reading; and the gap between our FRL and non-FRL students is smaller than the average AEA and State gaps.

As a staff, we are aware of the changing demographics of our student population, with an increasing number of students coming from cycles of generational poverty. In response, we are referencing Ruby Payne's book BRIDGING POVERTY. Through our implementation of the State's School-Wide Positive Behavior

Intervention/Supports, we are explicitly defining and teaching the middle-class values and expectations that are pre-requisites for success in schools. Thus, we are leveling the playing field for students of all economic backgrounds. Furthermore, we are attempting to mitigate the effects of poverty by partnering with social services agencies to deliver programs like the Food Bank of Iowa's "Backpack Buddies" and the Department of Public Health's "I-Smiles."

Third, there is a correlation between the percent proficient and the number of special education students in a given year. We have reconfigured our RTI system so that interventions are layered. Special education students now receive core instruction plus Tier II interventions plus Tier III (special education) interventions. All teachers, not just the special education personnel, share the responsibility for the learning of special education students. This is a significant shift in thinking and practice that will continue to impact the results for our special education students. In looking at five years of EdInsight data, our math and reading proficiency rates for 3rd grade special education students are below the annual targets set by the State trajectory for 100% for 2014. However, our proficiency averages are 1-12% above the State averages in math and 10-60% above in reading.

2. Using Assessment Results:

a) In addition to using Iowa Assessments, we use a menu of school-wide and classroom assessments to monitor student learning, adjust instruction, evaluate school performance, and inform stakeholders.

Teachers have a thorough knowledge of formative assessment practices and implement assessment for learning in their classrooms daily. During common planning times, grade level teams use this information to plan the grouping of students as well as the focus and pacing of instruction. Teachers also use formative assessment results to engage students in self-evaluation and goal setting. Accelerated Reader quizzes, math fluency checks, level word tests, and IEP probes are some examples.

School-wide assessments are administered on an annual schedule to monitor individual student learning. Preschool screening assessments include Ages and Stages, Individual Growth and Development Indicators, the Boehm Concept Test, and Creative Curriculum GOLD. The results of these screenings are used to determine the need for early intervention services and to measure individual student growth from fall to spring.

At the kindergarten through 3rd grade level, school-wide assessments include the Developmental Spelling Inventory, Basic Reading Inventory, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy, STAR Reader, and Measures of Academic Progress. The Observation Survey Record, Key Math, and CogAt assessments are also used to screen subgroups for placement in Reading Recovery, Title I, and Gifted/Talented programs.

Following each school-wide assessment, grade level teams meet with the Assessment Team to analyze results. The data is used to determine the instructional priorities for classroom instruction and to identify the needs for Tier I classroom interventions. A continuum of Tier II and Tier III interventions is available for students who did not achieve the benchmarks. For each student who is assigned to an intervention group, a measurable goal is written, and a system of progress monitoring is established. All teachers involved with the student are aware of, work toward, and monitor progress toward the goal. In this way, interventions and classroom instruction are closely aligned. Progress monitoring data is reviewed at least monthly at grade level meetings, and intervention groups are flexible according to student needs.

The Core Curriculum (C2) team also uses assessment results to set targets for improved instruction and to determine program effectiveness. For example, after analysis of fall DSA scores, they identified a need to address the fidelity with which Word Journeys was being implemented. The team used item analysis to discover a need for more vocabulary building in math and science. They also used fall STAR data to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of summer school.

The building leadership, district leadership, School Board, and community school improvement committee look at building data to set team, building, and district goals. Student achievement data has also become a source of celebration and pride.

b) Individual student data is shared parents at parent/teacher conferences, and building data is shared with community stakeholders via newsletters, Facebook, news articles, and public meetings. When results are shared, the purposes of the assessment as well as possible conclusions and implications from the data are also explained.

3.   Sharing Lessons Learned:

Prior to whole grade sharing, there were multiple opportunities for the two separate teaching staffs to share successful strategies. This allowed for a blending of the most optimal approaches as South Central Calhoun Elementary was formed. Southern Cal teachers shared the Daily 5 methodology of reading instruction; Rockwell City-Lytton teachers shared how to implement Word Journeys for phonics and spelling instruction.

Within our district, the elementary teachers have worked with teachers from the middle school, both to share effective practices and to improve alignment between the curricula of the two buildings. For example, elementary teachers shared a scope and sequence, materials, and rubrics they developed for the direct instruction of comprehension strategies. Currently, the elementary interventionist teachers are meeting with the middle school interventionist teachers to help them use assessment data and to build their own RTI system with multi-tiered interventions.

Within our Area Education Association (AEA), our teachers have attended various trainings, workshops, and collaborative events in which they have shared successful strategies with their counterparts from other districts. Our Positive Behavior Support Team has presented our building-wide discipline procedures trainings. Individual teachers have shared reading strategies at Quint County Reading Association meetings and Iowa Reading Association conferences. The teacher- librarian, preschool, technology, and gifted/talented teachers as well as the principal are involved in professional networks through the AEA. Through these networks, they both share and receive new ideas.

We've been honored to have representatives from various districts and agencies visit our preschool classes as a model for a high-quality, integrated program.

Our school is also very open to pre-service teachers. High school students complete school-to-work experiences. Undergraduate education majors complete practicums and student teaching experience with our staff. We have multiple requests each year from area colleges, and we welcome these future educators as we believe we can contribute to their solid preparation.

4.   Engaging Families and Community:

Families are kept informed of student progress through on-line announcements, texts, newsletters, Facebook, student agendas, parent-teacher conferences, 504 updates, and IEP meetings. Formal progress reports occur four times a year in the form of report cards with a summary of school-wide assessment results.

Family input is solicited through feedback surveys. Families are invited to share talents, interests, and occupations, and they are given opportunities to participate in activities, projects, and field trips. Special events are planned for families including open houses, class performances, and fun nights.

Our school benefits from an active Parent –Teacher Organization. Members sponsor fundraising events and provide volunteers for school events. Through their efforts, the elementary has sustained field trips and acquired additional classroom technology including two iPads for every classroom plus training and apps.

Families and community members are engaged at the decision-making and policy levels. They serve on advisory committees for Positive Behavior Supports, preschool, guidance, gifted/talented, and Title I programs. Finally, our district's Comprehensive School Improvement Committee meets at least bi-annually to set goals and review progress.

Our leadership structure includes a "Community Connections and Celebrations" (C3)Team to deliberately and strategically bring the community into the elementary and the students into the community. They have recruited a core of retired community members to volunteer, assisting teachers and helping students during and after the school day. These volunteers, who would have no other connection to our school, have become a critical piece of our success. The C3 Team has also created opportunities for students to visit nursing homes, clean up the walk-park, and hang artwork at the senior dining site.

The building principal speaks to community groups like Rotary, the Lions, and the Chamber to build a greater understanding of and support for the school. For example, after sharing some student demographic data with the Rotary Club, members provided new coats for needy elementary students.   The principal attends Calhoun County Interagency meetings to collaborate with local social service agencies. Now, the Iowa Food Bank provides weekend food for kids, a Hospice counselor meets at school with students who recently experienced a loss, and a new alliance for mental health is under development.

SCC Elementary supports other youth organizations. We have policies that allow the dissemination of information and the use of our facilities by groups such as Girl/Boy Scouts, sports leagues, and 4H clubs.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

Historically, Iowa did not have state standards; each district had the task of defining standards for every content area at each grade level. To make this work manageable and more valid, our school joined Mid-Iowa School Improvement Consortium (MISIC). Our representatives helped write content area standards, benchmarks, and assessments based on national documents. Member districts then contracted with Northwest Evaluation Association to develop computer-adaptive assessments that were strongly aligned with the written curriculum. Both Rockwell City-Lytton and Southern Cal were MISIC districts prior to whole-grade sharing, making the alignment of the two districts' curricula a much smoother process than if they had written standards independently.

Our school officially adopted Iowa Core at the outset of our whole-grade sharing agreement. The Core identifies essential skills, content, and processes for the content areas of literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21st Century Skills (employable skills, financial, health, technology, and civic literacy). The Iowa Core is strongly aligned to national standards for each content area, and it was developed after much input from content specialists and local stakeholders. In addition to content, Iowa Core also delineates best practices for each content area and general characteristics of effective instruction: student-centered classrooms, teaching for understanding, assessment for learning, rigor/relevance, and teaching for learner differences. This comprehensive approach is helping us achieve stronger alignment between the written, taught, and assessed curriculum. It also represents significant shifts toward deeper learning in all disciplines.

For content areas not included in Iowa Core, teachers developed local curricula by following MISIC standards and national standards as set forth by corresponding national organizations. All teachers know, however, that they share the responsibility for addressing the literacy and 21st Century Learning Skills components of Iowa Core.

Iowa Core provides a curricular framework but not a detailed scope and sequence of topics, units, and instructional activities. Much is left to local decision-makers and the professional judgment of teachers. Its implementation has been organized into three major stages. First, the content and processes of each subject area is unpacked. In our Area Education Agency (AEA), this work is being accomplished through the "Investigations" process. Second, units of instruction are developed. The approach used in our AEA is conceptually-based instruction, and the methodology is backward-design. Third, units are delivered with fidelity to effective instructional practices.

To date, SCC Elementary has worked with neighboring districts to complete the "Investigations" and unit-writing stages for math. Similar work on literacy will begin soon, with science and social studies to follow. Parallel to the curriculum work of classroom teachers, content specialists have studied Iowa Core, particularly 21st Century Learning Skills and literacy. All teachers have begun the third stage of work. They have studied and implemented strategies for formative assessment and differentiated instruction across all content areas. Finally, we have aligned our materials review/adoption cycle with our implementation plan.

Our literacy curriculum includes foundational reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills as related to texts of increasing complexity. The math curriculum addresses the domains of cardinality, algebraic thinking, geometry, operations, and measurement/data with heavily emphasis on problem-solving, reasoning, and communicating. Science curriculum engages students in inquiry in physical, life, and earth sciences. Our social studies curriculum exposes students to critical concepts in behavioral sciences, economics, geography, history, political science, and civic literacy. Both science and social studies are enriched by our large collection of nonfiction, leveled reading books, and writing skills are taught in the context of all the subject areas.

Our health and nutrition curricula are integrated into our physical education classes to teach students healthy lifestyles. We exceed the required thirty minutes of physical activity per day for K-3 students.

Visual and performing arts curriculum is designed to provide the foundational skills young children need in order to develop into skilled artists and musicians. Students get a minimum of 60 minutes each per week.

In the area of technology, students are taught specific skills and applications for the purpose of communicating, creating, and connecting in authentic contexts, in all content areas.

Students also receive weekly instruction in library/media skills as well as guidance. The guidance curriculum includes social/personal, career, and academic skill sets.

2.   **Reading/English:**

a) Our reading curriculum reflects Iowa Core: literature, informational texts, and foundational skills (print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics/word recognition, fluency). Materials, methods, and delivery methods are chosen based on research including Reading First, Fountas and Pinnell, and "Daily 5" framework. Ninety minutes are devoted to reading daily.

Thirty minutes is for whole-group. Teachers use grade-level texts and evidence-based strategies like think-alouds and explicit instruction to advance students' knowledge of vocabulary, story elements, text structure, and reasoning skills around a common text. Heterogeneous grouping promotes rich discussion for students of all abilities.

Sixty minutes is for independent and small group reading plus writing about reading. Per Iowa Core, students read a range of texts representing increased complexity. Students take the STAR Reader test to determine their independent reading level and guide book selection for independent reading. Computerized quizzes monitor comprehension and provide teachers with information about what students are reading and how they are progressing.

Leveled texts are used during small group instruction. Assessments determine each student's instructional reading level, and groups of 4-8 students with common needs are formed. Teachers select texts from our collection of fiction and non-fiction texts leveled A-R according to the criteria of Fountas and Pinnell. Using these books, teachers follow a common lesson plan to explicitly teach decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills during daily lessons. The content and skills from the lesson then becomes the basis for the writing about reading.

Specific methods used for decoding include phonemic awareness, sight word memorization, and direct instruction of phonetic rules/word families. Making Words, Words Their Way and Word Journeys have been useful resources.   Fluency is accomplished with repeated and choral readings, poetry, and programs like "Read Naturally" and "Great Leaps." Specific comprehension skills are modeled, practiced, and mastered according to a school-wide scope and sequence.

The ultimate objective of the K-3 reading curriculum is college/career readiness. For students reading below grade level, our RTI system provides a continuum of interventions in addition to core instruction. Often, the same materials and practices are used with additional time, repetition, and support. At the upper tiers of interventions, more strategic and intensive protocols such as "Guided Reading Plus" and Reading Recovery are implemented per Linda Dorn's Comprehensive Intervention Model.

Finally, the skills of students reading above grade level are advanced by providing increasingly complex texts, expanding their vocabulary, and challenging them to make more sophisticated connections.

3. Mathematics:

Our math curriculum is organized around the five strands of Iowa Core: counting/cardinality, operations/algebraic thinking, numbers/operations, measurement/data, and geometry. These five strands spiral through each grade level. In addition, students are provided with repeated opportunities to master eight mathematical practices.

In addition to mastery of essential skills, concepts, and processes, math instruction needs to promote flexible thinking, the development of multiple solution strategies, discovery methods, and student understanding at the conceptual level. To achieve this, we've chosen Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), a research-based methodology for teaching math. Our commitment to this approach included three years of training with coached implementation. Pre- and post-test data show dramatic improvement in student ability to solve complex, authentic problems with multiple strategies.

Sixty minutes daily are devoted to math instruction. Teachers use a variety of print and technological resources to teach math according to the content of Iowa Core and the processes of CGI. They worked with grade-alike colleagues from neighboring districts to develop units of instruction using the process of backward-design. In order to ensure a better aligned and more standardized curriculum (written, taught, and assessed), a published curriculum was chosen after a year of study and review. "Math Expressions" by Houghton-Mifflin will be implemented beginning with the 2014-2015 school year.

In addition to the core curriculum, Title I math is available for the remediation of skill deficits. Scores for the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests as well as teacher recommendations are used for placement in Title I, and placement in the program is fluid according to student deficits and needs. At the other end of the spectrum, whole-grade acceleration in math is an option for students who both meet the placement guidelines on the MAP tests and exhibit particular affective characteristics. For all ability levels, technology applications provide motivation and differentiated practice, both at home and school, on critical math skills. The computer program "First in Math" is an example of one such application.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Our preschool-grade 3 music curriculum focuses on music as a means of communication between individuals and across cultures. Understanding how people made music for centuries gives students a context for their own endeavors. Essential skills and concepts are organized by element — pitch, rhythm, form — to be mastered one at a time.

Pitch sequence begins with vocal exploration and the dominant-tonic cadence, fills in the middle pitch, then completes the pentatone. Students learn Solfege syllables to name intervals which are sung, played on barred instruments and keyboards, and later read on staff and played on recorders.

Rhythm sequence starts with steady beat in preschool and progresses to exploring two or three sounds on the beat and finally grouping sounds into measures in third grade. Young students acquire these skills through active listening and playing small percussion then progress to reading and writing.

Form is discovered through movement. Children use parachutes, scarves, or folk dancing as they listen and interpret the form of folk and classical music. The curriculum is delivered in a developmental sequence in which children learn through the body and sound before sight. Instruction encompasses three phases: the rote phase involving echo, mirror, and improvise; decoding involving listening or reading for an answer; and creating involving the application of knowledge to original work.

Assessments include observation of students demonstrating the target concept. Video or audio recordings assess large groups performing a skill like timing or singing. Written assignments are used when appropriate. Students often complete tasks in teams, building levels of connection and a sense of contribution for group success.

Concerts are also developmental. Kindergarteners and first graders perform once a year in a familiar room for a small audience. Second and third grade students use a formal stage setting and perform as a 60-80 member class, showcasing what they worked on throughout the year.

Making music is physical and social, facilitates an emotional connection to the world, and enables the brain to engage in a comprehensive fashion that is not duplicated by any other activity.

Simple patterning activities reinforce math work. Rhythmic movement helps children internalize subdivision, providing a physical and practical basis for study of fractions. Timing and pitch work build attention and listening discrimination which are foundational for reading. Other correlations to reading skills include moving left to right through space, chunking sounds together, corresponding rhythm to syllables of words, and reading multi-verse scores.

(b) SCC Elementary has been operating a preschool program for three-, four-, and five-year-old children since 2002. Initially, the program was designed for students in need of early childhood special education services, but it has since grown into an integrated program that includes children on IEPs, whose families pay tuition and students who are funded by Head Start, and others who are funded through Iowa's State Voluntary Preschool Program. We are very proud of our integrated approach that serves all district children through a unified program rather than in separate programs operated by different agencies. This has been accomplished by collaborating with several other governmental agencies including Early Childhood Iowa, Calhoun County Public Health, Childcare Resource and Referral, and AEA Early Access.

Preschool instruction is based on Creative Curriculum, a research-based early childhood curriculum. It includes the areas of social/emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development. Language development is given a particularly strong emphasis. A curriculum map articulates the specific topics covered, concepts taught, and skills mastered during each of the three years. The written curriculum is aligned with not only Creative Curriculum but also with the Iowa Early Learning Standards, the "Head Start Performance Standards," and the research based assessment Creative Curriculum GOLD. Because of the correlation of the curriculum to state and national standards, there is a high degree of alignment to the K-3 curriculum. To confirm that this is the case, early childhood teachers meet regularly with kindergarten teachers to evaluate the preschool-kindergarten curricula for gaps and overlaps and to ensure that expectations increase in complexity and depth.

Curricular units are organized by themes and topics that are developmentally appropriate and interesting. Unit plans identify essential concepts, critical vocabulary, specific literacy and math skills, activities fine motor practice, and experiences. Classroom routines and interest centers are also important parts of the instructional program. For example, expanding students' vocabulary and counting skills are embedded into the daily routines for snack time. Students also learn as they explore interest centers like the dramatic play area, the science table, and the writing center. Furthermore, interest centers reflect unit content when, for instance, the housekeeping area is transformed into a post office or the sensory table is filled with fall leaves. In these ways, both core curriculum and constructivist approaches are utilized to provide a rich program. Students also have the benefit of receiving weekly music instruction from an expert in early childhood music education.

The classroom environment is an important component of the program's curriculum and instruction. The Environmental Classroom Rating Scale-Revised is a research-based assessment that is used to ensure the environment is of the highest quality. This includes appropriate furnishings, technology (iPads and Smartboards), quality and quantity of books, a variety of manipulatives, and materials for creative expression. Our commitment to the educational environment extends to our age-appropriate outdoor playground that offers a safe space for gross motor play. An independent evaluator rated our preschool environment as a 6.67 on a scale of 1 to 7. In addition, the average student to teacher ratio is six to one, ensuring a high degree of individual attention.

Several standardized screening instruments and assessments are used to monitor students' skill acquisition and readiness for kindergarten. These include Individual Growth and Development Indicators, Creative

Curriculum GOLD, and Boehm Concept Test, and Ages and Stages. Students who do not demonstrate readiness skills in either the cognitive or social skills prior to kindergarten are enrolled in transitional kindergarten.

To help increase school readiness for the K-3 program, preschool teachers offer workshops to teach parents strategies that they can use to support learning. Topics have included literacy, math, and language development. One especially popular program involved a staff member modeling affective read-aloud procedures, and all parents were given a book with high-quality questions to ask while reading. Other ways that parents are informed and involved include home/school communication notebooks, Facebook, family night events, and a parent advisory committee.

Over 98% of our students enter kindergarten with at least one year of preschool experience. This has a dramatic impact on their readiness to learn. All children who attend preschool have access to hearing, vision, and dental screenings. They also benefit from the services of Area Education Association personnel including audiologist, speech and language pathologist, physical therapists, occupational therapists, school psychologists, an autism team, and assistive technology consultants. Students who attend preschool also come into kindergarten with the prerequisite behaviors for attending to instruction. Their vocabularies, background knowledge, and experiences are richer and more varied. Furthermore, kindergarten literacy and math assessment are consistently high.

The other measurable effect of preschool is in the area of special needs students. Our preschool teachers are educated and licensed in both early childhood and special education. Because of this, early intervention services are immediate, integrated, and intensive. Many students who exhibit delays or needs in preschool achieve and maintain grade-level (or above grade-level) skills through third grade and beyond.

5.   Instructional Methods:

While there is little ethnic diversity among our students, there is great disparity between high/low economic status and high/low cognitive level.

To meet the needs of diverse economic groups, we take a three-prong approach. First, we ensure the basic needs of food, shelter, and security are met. Brain research makes it clear that crisis trumps learning, so we address those primary concerns. Second, we implement School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions/Supports (SW-PBIS).   This is especially important for students coming to school with values and experiences different from the middle class values of schools. Third, we are deliberate in our efforts to provide rich experiences, build background knowledge, and expand vocabulary. These efforts begin in preschool where students are immersed into a language-rich, stimulating environment and continue through third grade through cultural assemblies, field trips, and virtual experiences.

The needs of intellectually diverse students are met through both heterogeneous groups and differentiated instruction. The composition of each class is strategically balanced to be representative of the entire spectrum of abilities. Thus, class discussions, cooperative activities, and peer modeling enrich the learning of all students. Within these heterogeneous classes, the core expectations (i.e. essential skills, content, processes) are held constant while time, number of repetitions, instructional materials, criteria for success, and mode of expression are variables.   Flexible grouping is used for spelling, reading, and math to target the needs of diverse groups within a given classroom.

In addition to classroom differentiation, a building-wide system of interventions meets the needs of cognitively diverse learners. Options along the continuum range from whole-grade math acceleration to special education. Reading Recovery, Title I, and gifted/talented programs provide formal services.

Technology is an indispensable tool. Computer adaptive assessments pinpoint what students can do and efficiently monitor progress. Document cameras, interactive white boards, and virtual manipulatives raise the level of student interest and engagement. Kindle audio books and leveled texts help students choose texts at their instructional levels plus access grade level texts through vocabulary and audio support. Multi-

leveled programs like First in Math provide practice opportunities below, at, and above grade level. Other applications provide opportunities to create, connect, and communicate and are especially useful for challenging advanced students to think beyond the four walls of the classroom. Finally, adaptive technology devices like Go Talk and programs like Teach Town or enable special needs students to communicate, connect with, and participate in the core curriculum.

6. Professional Development:

Our approach to professional development is data-driven, focused, and differentiated. Multiple sources of data determine the needs, priorities, and content of professional development. The building leadership analyzes achievement data to identify gaps and deficits. We reference professional literature, research, and consultants to match best theories and practices to building needs in the formation of a comprehensive building plan.

Given various student needs, constant policy changes, and multiple developments in pedagogy, we have made a conscious effort to avoid fragmented initiatives that result in shallow learning. We are committed to align efforts around a single focus for three to five years. As informed by the Iowa Professional Development Model, we recognize that meaningful improvement requires a cycle of theory, practice, feedback, and reflection.

For three years, our focus has been math instruction as defined by the essential skills, concepts, processes, and methodology of Iowa Core. Much of this work has been done under the umbrella of Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), an approach in which all K-3 teachers have been educated. As we conclude the third and final year of training, we're now planning how to sustain its implementation with fidelity.

A building-wide focus has helped build a community of common practice in the area of math. It has not, however, been applicable for all teachers. Differentiated learning opportunities have been developed for reading, preschool, and content teachers (music, art, guidance, library, and physical education). The commonalities among these activities are a tight alignment to content standards and the characteristics of effective instruction as defined in Iowa Core; the use of data to inform instruction; and implementation with coaching and feedback. By forming a consortium with neighboring schools, we've been able to provide these teachers with collaborative networks to enhance this work.

In addition to building professional development, teachers also establish Individual Career Development Plans. They are accountable for the learning defined by these plans through the formal evaluation process.

The building principal participates in all professional development activities, establishes a personal professional development plan, and engages in learning opportunities specific to administrators through various networks and organizations. Our approach also includes increasing the capacity the building leadership to facilitate and sustain future improvements. While the current focus has been math, a group of teachers is working "ahead" on literacy initiatives in preparation to guide the building's focus on literacy for 2014-2015.

Finally, we are developing professional development for our paraprofessionals.

7. School Leadership

The Board and Superintendent provide support for SCC Elementary and hold us accountable. They provide fiscal leadership to maintain the financial solvency of the district and ensure the funding of educational priorities. These types of leadership decisions from the top impact student learning directly. They have allowed for the purchase of needed materials and the hiring of the necessary staff to implement a solid and effective "response to intervention" system. Furthermore, district leaders also provide guidance in goal-setting and hold us responsible for measuring and reporting progress. They also contribute to the positive climate of our school by expressing appreciation for the work of the elementary staff and celebrating their successes.

At the building level, the principal's philosophy of leadership is to eliminate barriers to teaching and learning. Whether it's revising the building schedule, dealing with discipline issues, or planning professional development, she considers it her primary responsibility to provide teachers with the time, materials, and training needed to deliver optimal teaching. Likewise, she works to ensure students have their basic needs met, feel safe, and have the resources and technology to learn to their maximum potential.

While the building principal accepts ultimate responsibility, she is committed to staff input and shared decision-making. The leadership structure of the elementary includes three teacher leadership teams. The "Common Core" (C2) Team oversees the implementation of Iowa Core. This includes gathering teacher input and making recommendations regarding professional development, selecting curricular materials, and determining school-wide assessments. The "Community Connections and Celebrations" (C3) Team works to strengthen the ties between the school and the community. This team also publicizes and celebrates major events and successes. The "Climate, Culture, Character, and Conduct" (C4) Team oversees our building's involvement in the State's School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions/Supports (SW-PBIS). They receive training on this initiative, help establish and teach school-wide expectations for appropriate behavior, create systems of acknowledging positive behavior, define corrective actions for negative behavior, and collect and analyze data regarding student discipline and building climate.

Every teacher serves on one of these teams, and each meets monthly. In addition, the principal meets bi-monthly with the paraprofessionals in order to solicit their input on issues and decisions. Finally, elementary teachers have the opportunity to participate in district leadership activities by serving on the Technology and/or Teacher Quality Committee.

Leadership is also distributed among students through service projects, special assignments, and an Elementary Student Council.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math   **Test:** Iowa Assessments
All Students Tested/Grade: 3   **Edition/Publication Year:** 2013
Publisher: Riverside/Iowa Testing Program

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	93	89	94	88	90
% Advanced	26	25	35	24	24
Number of students tested	27	37	31	34	42
Percent of total students tested	100	0	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	88	100	75	100
% Advanced	13	19	13	0	20
Number of students tested	8	16	8	8	20
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	67	67		67	
% Advanced	0	0		0	
Number of students tested	3	6		3	
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or					

Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	93	89	97	90	90
% Advanced	26	24	38	26	23
Number of students tested	27	33	29	31	40
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: NOTES: The grade-level configuration of our building has changed over the past 4 years. For 2008-2009, we were a K-4 building and tested grades 3-4. For 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, the building was a K-6 building, and grades 3-6 were tested. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, the building was K-3, testing only 3rd grade. Beginning in 2013, students from both Rockwell City-Lytton and Southern Cal were attended and were tested at this building under the whole-grade sharing agreement, and this is reflected in the demographic data for the students served by the school. However, only the results for RCL district students are reported in Part IV and on the data table because (1) RC-L data was used as the basis for the Blue Ribbon nomination and (2) only RC-L data was available for trend analysis. Finally, the 2000 edition of Iowa Tests of Basic Skills was used for years 2008-2009 through 2011-2012. The 2012 edition, revised and renamed Iowa Assessments, was used beginning with the 2012-2013 year.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA　　　　　　　　　　**Test:** Iowa Assessments
All Students Tested/Grade: 3　　　　　　**Edition/Publication Year:** 2012
Publisher: Riverside/Iowa Testing Program

School Year	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009
Testing month	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan	Jan
SCHOOL SCORES*					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	92	84	91	90
% Advanced	15	28	23	25	7
Number of students tested	27	37	31	34	42
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
% of students tested with alternative assessment	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	88	86	88	75	100
% Advanced	25	13	0	0	5
Number of students tested	8	16	8	8	20
2. Students receiving Special Education					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	67	67		67	
% Advanced	0	0		0	
Number of students tested	3	6		3	
3. English Language Learner Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					

Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	91	93	90	90
% Advanced	15	33	24	19	8
Number of students tested	27	33	29	31	40
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: NOTES: The grade-level configuration of our building has changed over the past 4 years. For 2008-2009, we were a K-4 building and tested grades 3-4. For 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, the building was a K-6 building, and grades 3-6 were tested. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, the building was K-3, testing only 3rd grade. Beginning in 2013, students from both Rockwell City-Lytton and Southern Cal were attended and were tested at this building under the whole-grade sharing agreement, and this is reflected in the demographic data for the students served by the school. However, only the results for RCL district students are reported in Part IV and on the data table because (1) RC-L data was used as the basis for the Blue Ribbon nomination and (2) only RC-L data was available for trend analysis. Finally, the 2000 edition of Iowa Tests of Basic Skills was used for years 2008-2009 through 2011-2012. The 2012 edition, revised and renamed Iowa Assessments, was used beginning with the 2012-2013 year.