U.S. Department of Education
2015 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 Mr. Duane Krusemark
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)
Official School Name Douglas County West Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 301 South Pine Street PO Box 378
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Valley   State NE   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 68064-0378

County   Douglas County   State School Code Number* 28-0015

Telephone 402-359-2151   Fax 402-359-5421

Web site/URL   http://www.dcwest.org   E-mail dkrusemark@dcwest.org

Twitter Handle
@DCWestFalcons   Facebook Page   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*Mrs. Melissa Poloncic   E-mail: mpoloncic@dcwest.org
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Douglas County West Community Schools Tel.   402-359-2151
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 Mr. Jeff Clausen
(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 and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are 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 2014-2015 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 2009 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: 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, or 2014.

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   1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   1 Middle/Junior high schools
                                            1 High schools
                                            0 K-12 schools

                                            3 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
   [X] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

3. 19 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	0	0	0
K	32	36	68
1	32	20	52
2	38	17	55
3	29	30	59
4	20	26	46
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	151	129	280

5. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
2 % Black or African American
5 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
90 % White
1 % Two or more races
100 % Total

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

6. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2013 - 2014 year: 22%

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, 2013 until the end of the school year	22
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2013 until the end of the school year	36
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	58
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1	262
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.221
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	22

7. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
   8 Total number ELL

   Number of non-English languages represented: 2
   Specify non-English languages: Spanish, Nuer

8. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 40 %

   Total number students who qualify: 111

Information for Public Schools Only - Data Provided by the State

The state has reported that 43 % of the students enrolled in this school are from low income or disadvantaged families based on the following subgroup(s): Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals

9. Students receiving special education services: <u>14</u> %

      <u>40</u> 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.

<u>0</u> Autism   <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness   <u>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness   <u>4</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance   <u>21</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment   <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation   <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities   <u>8</u> 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.	6
Paraprofessionals	5
Student support personnel e.g., guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   <u>18:1</u>

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

Required Information	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	97%	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 2014

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 X

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

15. Please summarize your school mission in 25 words or less: Douglas County West Community Schools create passionate learners by maximizing student achievement through dynamic learning experiences for all students in a community-supported environment.

PART III – SUMMARY

Douglas County West Elementary serves the communities of Waterloo and Valley, Nebraska. DC West is a reorganized school district in our tenth year of existence. The merger of these two deeply rooted, historic schools have strong beliefs in education and support the school district. We are part of a Learning Community, which allows us to support students through an open enrollment process, increasing population 17% since 2010. Our elementary serves approximately 280 students K-4 with an average class size of 18 students. In addition, we maintain a dynamic preschool program serving an additional 56 students. DC West is a school-wide Title I building with 40% free and reduced lunch, mobility rate of 22% and 16% receive special education, including speech and language impairments. During 2014-2015 DC West continued to receive District wide accreditation through AdvanceED. DC West Elementary School staff consists of highly qualified staff members who share a common goal of providing enriching experiences for students. Master degrees are held by 67.9% of our teachers and 100% of staff are NCLB Qualified Teachers. The average longevity of our team is 17 years. The paradigm of learning at DC West is not what we need to do to "teach" but what we need to do to ensure all students "learn". Our staff has a teamwork mentality and a willingness to help one another.

DC West Elementary staff, parents and community members are actively involved in student academics, youth activities, and special events. We have strong traditions and partnerships. Parents volunteer in classrooms and help with extracurricular activities. We have an excellent Parent Teacher Student Association that organizes fundraisers, events, and opportunities for our students. Traditionally, they host an annual carnival that brings together the entire community. DC West staff, community organizations, and business partnerships work together and provide exciting experiences for our students. For example, our local YMCA partners with us and provides SPLASH, a water safety program. The Elkhorn Grange provides dictionaries for students. The Food Bank for the Heartland provides a Backpack Program for many of our students who are in need of a meal; currently providing 24 meals a week. Another tradition is the Book It program, which motivates and encourages reading at home. Each month students receive incentives and awards for achieving monthly goals. In addition, our Title I Parent Night is strong. At this time students and families receive information on the program, play skill based games, receive a book and enjoy a social time around a meal. Another proud moment is Veteran's Day. We annually celebrate freedom by bringing in community members from our local VFW to honor the past and present veterans.

DC West Elementary has accomplished milestones throughout our ten years of existence that we are proud of. Examples include: Recognition as a national Title I "Distinguished School" in 2009 and 2014 for exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years; we have met the increasing, rigorous percentage needed to reach the AYP goal. We are the only Nebraska elementary school to meet AYP with 100% this past year. "Hoops for Heart" is another proud milestone considering our economically challenged population. For the past ten years DC West has been one of the top five schools raising money for the American Heart Association, with the last three years being the number one school in the state. Most recently, December 2014, DC West Elementary was one of ten schools in the Omaha Metro area to be included in the Buffet Early Childhood Institute. This initiative will provide cutting edge educational opportunities for birth to grade 3.

DC West Elementary implements key strategies to encourage and challenge all students to develop their full potential academically, emotionally, physically, socially, and culturally. Opportunities for all students to achieve are ensured through collaboration, commitment, timely interventions and progress monitoring. Best practices combined with differentiation, enable achievement opportunities for all students. We currently use research-based instructional strategies, such as Read Well, Mastering Math Facts, Four Square Writing, Response to Intervention, Measure of Academic Progress, STAR, AR, Reflex Math, and Check for Learning. We know these strategies are working because we review and monitor qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate effects of instructional learning. Guidance programs including Positive Behavior Support, and ESL ensure growth for each individual student. We are more than just a school. We are a family. By partnering with students, parents and community we are able to build meaningful relationships. Students that walk through the halls know they are cared for, supported, and respected, which contributes to our academic success.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Core Curriculum:**

Douglas County West creates proficient readers by engaging all students in an active literacy environment. Our reading goals, framed by Nebraska's Standards include: speaking/listening strategies to communicate for a variety of purposes; multiple fluency and digital literacies; reading strategies to comprehend text; writing strategies to communicate. Various approaches are used to obtain proficiency targets. The use of whole group instruction, vocabulary and comprehension strategies along with phonetic and phonemic approaches develop foundational skills. Skilled activity examples include developmental games, songs, stories, art, and handwriting lessons to introduce skills and reinforce instructional strategies. Small group instruction focuses on decoding, vocabulary, word structure, print concepts, comprehension, fluency and test-taking strategies. Instructional strategies to read words, increase vocabulary, use main idea and supporting details, to infer, draw conclusions, predict, and identify characteristics, elements and features of text such as bias and purpose are emphasized. Teachers continuously hone in on students' reading skills via paired and choral readings, genre and novel studies, literacy centers, leveled readers, and graphic organizers. DC West provides a strong literacy foundation; students make connections to the world around them.

Our interactive math curriculum is also framed by Nebraska State Standards. Nebraska's math standards are wrapped around the "big ideas" of multiple representations, problem solving, connections, reasoning, and communication within number sense, geometric/measurement, algebraic, data analysis and probability benchmarks. DC West teachers, with ESU3 support, diagnostically created our response to intervention (RTI) approach to meet student needs. Step by step guidelines have been created into a teacher handbook for procedural consistency. Combining RTI protocol and assessment data with our text series provides successful results. First, all students complete an adaptive MAP assessment at the beginning of the year, with follow up assessments at winter and end of year terms. This allows teachers to identify students falling at or below the 25%ile on the composite score, and identifies benchmarks students are low in. If students' results are in the predetermined percentile they are in need of Tier 2 interventions. After the identification process, students are given skills diagnostic intervention assessments. After evaluation, Tier 2 interventions are taught to students to close skill gaps. Student progress is monitored and recorded. Our text series, enVisions, embraces the approach of tiered teaching throughout all lessons and math exploration. For example, each lesson begins with whole group instruction through an interactive learning activity with step-by-step visual instruction. This allows students to develop an understanding of the topic as small group instruction occurs during guided and independent practice. Teachers encourage students to use prescribed strategies to find ones that work best for them and level homework based on students' performance. This circular process offers repeated opportunities for students to gain conceptual understandings. With this well-encompassed approach to math, our math school improvement goal was met and achievement gaps show growth.

Our core science curriculum provides standards-based lessons. Teachers' activities promote curiosity; foster a development of science. Students build upon their experiences to develop applicable understandings of concepts. Teachers implement vocabulary and thinking processes through inquiry, application and knowledge; gain understandings of society and human endeavors through connections to everyday life. In addition, experiments, observations, guest speakers, and technology aid our students' understanding of Nebraska framework/standards: life, earth/space, physical and inquiry.

Social Studies lessons are designed to involve and inspire every student to become young patriots with intellectual and emotional connection to our community, state, nation, and world. Students gain perspectives through stories of people, places, and events in order to make connections and become responsible citizens. Nebraska's standards revolve around curricular themes creating opportunities for students to become informed participating citizens. (Fourth grade students specialize and study Nebraska history. Students learn our state's geography, history, economics, citizenship, and government.) Our school pursues supplemental hands-on resources, for example, trunks of replicated artifacts from the Historical Society to strengthen student understandings. Teachers utilize timelines, graphs, organizers, real-life activities, technology explorations, practice books, and map skills to engage in core curricular standards learning.

We have chosen these core curricular approaches because they meet the individual needs of students to become independent successful learners. Knowing all students' skills are varied, DC West monitors data and directs resources to implement extra support programs including: Special Education, ELL, Title I and HAL. This array of assistive differentiation helps to meet students' needs through creating academic growth opportunities, enrichments and challenges for students performing below and above grade level.

2. **Other Curriculum Areas:**

Physical Education:
The K-4 physical education's primary goal is to build students' fundamental movement skills through appropriate means. The program also provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to engage in a variety of physical activities, which also enhances personal fitness. Students in K-1 attend physical education class four times a week for 25 minutes each day and students 2-4 meet twice a week for 50 minutes each day. Students learn appropriate sportsmanship and fair play in physical education. They learn how to work as a team and as individuals, both of which are lifelong skills. Douglas County West Elementary is proud of their community involvement in the "Hoops for Heart" program through the American Heart Association. During this month long event our PE teacher discusses heart healthy exercises and foods, and students learn how to take their heart rate. The students raise money for heart disease awareness. In the past three years DC West Elementary has been the number one school in the state for raising money. Students have a strong sense of pride and work hard at this program; they are making others aware of heart disease. In addition to supporting healthy habits, DC West students begin their day at Walking Club in the gymnasium. This not only fosters physical movement, but social interactions.

Technology:
Technology plays an essential role at Douglas County West Elementary. We understand that we live in a technology-rich environment, therefore it is important that our students are given learning opportunities to experience Century 21 technology skills. Teachers are able to access the mobile lab and iPad cart to integrate technology skills across curricular areas. Kidblog, PowerPoint, keyboarding, applications, and interactive boards are all examples of how we engage and motivate our young learners. In addition, students have computer class once a week for 50 minutes with our media specialist.

Music:
We believe that music benefits the overall well being of every child at DC West Elementary. Students value music as part of their lives and have meaningful participation in music. Students K-1 meet four times a week for 25 minutes and students in grades 2-4, meet twice a week for 50 minutes each time for music class. Twice a year our students perform in a K-4 concert to parents, staff, and community members. Students give back to their community by visiting our local nursing home, church groups, and assisted living home, by singing and playing instruments. Our K-4 students learn about the structure of music, which includes pitch, rhythm, dynamics, form, scales, and timbre. The goal is for them to transfer their knowledge to chorus and music in the middle and high school and to have a strong appreciation for the arts. At the 4th grade level students become more musically independent as they are introduced to formal instrumental training by using a recorder. This introduces them to other instruments that they will be using in middle school and high school.

Library:
DC West Elementary students experience library time once a week, which provides engaging literary activities. The 25 minute library time is an extension of our classrooms where academic skills are reinforced, such as print concepts, genre, elements of text features, and reference sources. Students across all grades have opportunities to read and interact. The library supports our Accelerated Reader program by labeling books according to book levels; making appropriate reading levels accessible for all students. The goal of our library is to encourage students to become lifelong readers and confident users of information and ideas.

Guidance:
Our Guidance program supports students' acquisition of essential skills and knowledge. This program works

with students, parents, teachers and external experts to ensure academic, social, and developmental needs are met. Kindergarten and first grade meet weekly; second through fourth grades meets twice a month for guidance. During this time, our guidance counselor presents mini lessons on various topics, some of which include bullying, compassion, and cooperation. The curriculum is a research-based violence prevention program called Second Step: Skills for Social and Academic success. It teaches skills that strengthens students' ability to learn, have empathy, manage emotions, and solve problems. She also meets with students individually and in small groups to help develop decision-making skills, to encourage the development of positive self-esteem, and to help students appreciate and value the commonalities and differences between each other. Guidance provides home outreach services, such as parenting and family classes along with monthly newsletter supports.

3. Instructional Methods and Interventions:

DC West's Instructional approaches across the curriculum include a vast variety of researched based instructional programs and strategies. Programs incorporated within curriculum and instruction include: Read Well, Ticket to Read, Mastering Math Facts, Four square Writing, Six Trait Writing, Positive Behavior Support Room, Caught Caring, Accelerated Reader, Reflex Math, and technology innovation support teams. Differentiated academic opportunities including tiered instructional processes, explicit instruction, technology-based support and specialty programs such as English Language Learner Support, High Ability Learner, Special Education, Guidance, Therapy, Student Assistant Teams and Title I are also in place to meet diverse and individual needs. Within these instructional approaches student's diverse individual educational needs are targeted, as students' skill levels are identified through the adaptive MAP assessments and grouped on instructional learning ladders to monitor growth.

DC West knows our strategies are working because we review and monitor data. Our data results show students meeting and exceeding standards, with a 100% student participation rate. Sustained professional development and best practices define strengths and weaknesses for school improvement goals; then we address the needs. Our educational service unit is utilized as an outside agency for response to intervention needs assessments and district service plans along with our internal evaluations to assist in achieving instructional goals.

Examples of math interventions utilized to ensure high levels of student learning and achievement include vocabulary development and alignment across the district, side by side with mastering math facts. Detailed vocabulary alignments were completed across Envision Text Books, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Glossaries and Standards Instructional Tools for Nebraska State Accountability. Alignment interventions allowed us to close gaps and bridge grade level curriculum, instruction and assessment. In addition mathematical vocabulary and definitions were placed on television monitors in major corridors, running throughout the day, which kept a repetitious pattern of review to be maintained as students moved through the hallways. The second math example includes our Title I program initiating a mastering math facts incentive program: BINGO BASH. Classroom teachers, on a daily basis, have a set of facts based on skill progression and monitor math fact mastery levels for individual students. Students achieving their end of the year goal participate in a well facilitated bingo bash celebrating student success. This intervention has become a tradition, and remembered year after year. Students are motivated and work hard to achieve this goal.

PART V – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results Narrative Summary:**

Nebraska's State of the Schools Report is our annual measurable outcome source providing the data table results for Douglas County West's 3rd and 4th grade reading and math. In reading, five years of data demonstrates an increase from 66 to 91 percent in grade three. Fourth grade has sustained percent proficient with results above 90 percent. In Math, third grade's percent proficiency trends show an increase of 84 to 91 percent; fourth grade sustained percent proficiency scores above 92 percent. Both grade levels exceed Nebraska's reading and math proficiency averages. In 2014 Nebraska's reading average was 79 and 78 percent respectively, where as Douglas County West's percent proficient was 91 percent in both grade levels. In 2014 Nebraska's math average was 76 and 77 percent, and DC West students obtained 91 and 96 percent proficiency. Each grade levels' annual measurable outcomes show consistent and/or steady growth patterns. Douglas County West's subgroups are predominately masked due to fewer than ten students, except for free and reduced. Within the poverty subgroup, third grade performance trends show an increase in proficiency in both reading and math. This increase is maintained with high proficiency percentages in both content areas throughout fourth grade. As a school we are proud of achieving the 100% AYP goal, No Child Left Behind, in both reading and math in 2014. Factors contributing to success are encouraging and retaining highly qualified teachers, collaborative teaching approaches, including purposeful scheduling to develop flexibility of resource teachers, Title I, ELL, HAL and support staff to meet student needs. Measures of Academic Progress, a diagnostic formative assessment begins with Kindergarten. School improvement focus of closing gaps in combination with a strong early childhood program, creates a solid foundation and aids in meeting building level goals of producing fluent readers and analytical problem solvers.

2. **Assessment for Instruction and Learning and Sharing Assessment Results:**

DC West has a district wide assessment plan and utilizes a variety of assessment means to guide decision making processes. The ongoing process of assessment for instruction is based on high priority curricular needs, as learning is imperative to student and school performance. DC West's assessment goal is to improve achievement outcomes for all students by utilizing multiple data points, including formative and summative data for timely instructional and district wide school improvement decisions. Our framework for assessments includes: norm reference test, NWEA/MAP (Northwest Education Association/Measures of Academic Progress), which is also our national assessment instrument for AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress), state accountability criterion reference tests, referred to as NeSA (Nebraska State Accountability) and curriculum benchmark tests to guide instruction.

Improving instruction and student learning is DC West's target. How we systematically achieve this is through utilization and analysis of assessment data. Data is used to: monitor our students' learning progress and guide decisions for improving student performance, to appropriately direct placement of students, to develop individual education plans and guide goal setting, to drive program planning, to evaluate needs for school improvement, to analyze curriculum development or create revisions, to aid in the allocation of resources, to meet certification guidelines and to communicates information to stakeholders, such as how the MAP or NeSA tests work, when they are given, their purposes and explanatory notes along with data results.

Transparent communications with stakeholders about academic achievements results are strived for through multiple outreach opportunities including: board meetings, community events, parent brochures, newsletters, media resources, web pages, open houses, and personal contacts, mailings of individual student reports, student conferencing, professional learning communities, business partnerships, parent support and strategic planning groups. Students, parents and community stakeholders are DC West's partners in education and are informed about academic achievements.

Part VI School Support

1. School Climate/Culture

DC West Elementary engages and motivates students while providing a positive environment that supports academic, social, and emotional growth. At the beginning of each school year students are invited to attend an Open House to meet and greet. This allows students to make personal connections, preview classroom expectations, meet fellow classmates, and obtain a sense of well-being. Throughout the year conferences are scheduled twice a year, with a 95% attendance; quarterly assemblies recognize students for citizenship, scholar, achievement, improvement, and attendance; State Testing achievements are celebrated by awarding certificates and medals of proficiency. Parents are invited to attend these quarterly awards to help celebrate students' achievements.

DC West continuously fosters school culture and promotes a positive environment by setting the stage for student success. Supportive cultures within our building and across our K-12 "Falcon" family are created. A prime example is our traditional 4th grade state writing pep rally. K-3 students offer exhilarating round robin chants while our high school band and mascot engages, motivates and supports students in a celebration of their best learning efforts. Our district "we believe in you" philosophy is a strong hold to testing efforts and results. Other K-12 interaction examples include student participation in athletic pep rallies and Homecoming Parade. As an elementary we cultivate additional positive behaviors. Examples include our PBiS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Support) program and "Caught Caring" assemblies. PBiS has trained experts working with individuals and small groups supporting students' academic, social and emotional growth patterns. "Caught Caring" begins by catching students making positive decisions and rewarding them with a caught caring ticket. These tickets are kept in decorative classroom buckets that are brought to our monthly awards assembly. Students' names drawn from the buckets have lunch with the principal and their group picture is taken for our local newspaper, and then hung on our school pride bulletin board. Caught Caring is a motivating support, but caring is our valued environment.

Teachers feel valued and supported too. All stakeholders: the superintendent, board of education, principals, certified and classified staff, students, families, and community members share a common goal of continuous school improvement, which creates an atmosphere of support. Teachers have a shared voice in decision-making. The friendly, positive demeanor, importance of teamwork, and small town atmosphere are "good-faith" components that are valued in our school culture. We celebrate academic successes along with years of service our end of the year's "Staff Recognition" dinner. Our school is our playground; each teacher is a valued team player.

2. Engaging Families and Community

DC West Elementary celebrates our engaging family and community support systems. Student achievement is strengthened through the commitment between all stakeholders. Our mission statement, "At Douglas County West Community Schools we create passionate learners by maximizing achievement through dynamic learning experiences which inspire and provide a quality education for all students within a safe and community-supported environment." is our cornerstone. A community supported environment is seen in the following examples: Kids on the Block, Nebraska Elks providing diabetes training, local Veterans sharing on Veterans Day, Community Fundraisers, Hoops for Heart, Elkhorn Grange providing dictionaries yearly to 3rd graders, Young Authors encourage writing/reading opportunities, Queen/King for the day volunteers coming in and reading to 1st graders weekly, The Douglas County Historical Society grant providing historical trunks for 4th grade, Nebraska history, Veteran Nurse Association and parent volunteers assisting with health screenings, grandparent and parent volunteers within the classroom, parent student teacher association meeting and planning, career days with community and parent involvement, book fairs, school carnivals, YMCA after school programs, backpack program (Food for the Heartland), Community Arbor Day festivities, communication networks such as newsletters, web sites, TV monitors throughout halls, Blackboard alert connections, Title I parent nights, conference, open houses, assemblies, crisis interventions with local authorities, scouting, athletic support groups/sponsors, churches, medical

facilities, booster clubs, at home reading and math programs, community fire department and law enforcement officials provide fire prevention trainings, lockdown and weather drills, bus safety and railroad crossing trainings, kindergarten donuts for dads, and American Education Week.

The examples above can be described as anchor stones that extend student success and school improvement partnerships as: engaging communications, linking resources, extending our educational community, collaborative forces seeking funding sources for key projects through grants and business/industry sponsorships, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and support to achieve goals, extending relationships, developing frameworks and defining belief statements, initiating, implementing and evaluation of projects and current bond issues, collaboration to form divisions of labor, building awareness of community needs through the local churches, creating safety and crisis intervention plans to benefit the welfare of students, creating relationships while strengthens and extending learning opportunities, engages community coordinating councils and legislative understandings, and assist in providing passionate and safe learning environments leading to quality education for all students.

3. Professional Development

Professional development at DC West uses a systemic PLCs (Professional Learning Communities)approach. PLC Teams are professional groups joined together to ensure a quality learning experience and offers "real time" needs evaluations. As a district we have sixteen (PK-12) PLC groups meeting across and within grade levels at designated times. DC West allocates early out times, every Friday afternoon, on the school calendar to work collaboratively towards the well being of all students. During this time PLC teams address four critical questions: 1. What will students know and be able to do? 2. How will students learn it? 3. How do we know students learned it? 4. What happens if students do not learn it or already know it? These questions have a directional impact on the capacity of teachers and administrators. The impact capacity includes: fundamental purpose, use of assessments, responses for when students don't learn, collaborative work efforts focusing on steps to produce results, a culture of interdependence and an approach to job-embedded learning.

Our professional development time is an environment of passionate educators working together with a strong commitment to excellence. Administrator expectations are outlined to support: the successful implementation of teams, acquisition and use of data, discussion and support of SMART goals and products with the teams, and to offer support as needed. Our district assessment director offers guidance towards alignment of academic standards and assessments; ELL and Sped specialists offer perspective and expertise; team leaders provide direction while teaching staff engage in systemic quality learning experiences to enhance student achievement and school improvement.

The PLC approach aligns with academic standards, supports student achievement and school improvement through key components. Examples of key components include: continual review of curriculum maps and standards, establishing SMART goals, develop a cycle of action plans, reflections and next steps, sharing of instructional strategies and resources, meeting logs, selection and development of formative assessments, regular evaluation, identification, implementation, collaboration and discussion of performance data. These components are supported through a menu of team work options that include: data analysis, sharing teaching/instructional strategies, book study, targeting skills, struggling students, behavior analysis, sharing resources, cross-curriculum projects, scope and sequence, vertical alignment of curriculum maps, engagement strategies, online community resources, RtI, learning walks and peer coaching, best research and resources for student support.

4. School Leadership

Our Board of Education consists of six elected officials that understand their primary responsibility is setting policy for the district. Along with the superintendent, building administrators work with the board to provide recommendations on any policy changes and candidates for hire. Teacher representatives are present at each meeting to stay informed of any changes to bring back to their organization and to present new curricular items to keep the board informed.

DC West Elementary leadership has a strong focus on team building and creating a school family environment that works hard to build on individual strengths of certified and classified staff. This starts by hiring and retaining highly qualified individuals. Part of the interview process, which has proven to be effective, is having grade level teachers participate in the questioning of the candidates. The candidates are also asked to prepare a lesson to present to the team for the grade level they are seeking employment. This process allows the team to choose the candidate that is the right fit for our school.

DC West has also been an active school in the PBiS program with other schools in the state of NE. This fits our philosophy of working with the positive nature of how we conduct ourselves and builds on the concept of sustainability within the school system. We develop and work as a team when working on school management while using data to drive our school improvement decision making process for any further changes. Teacher leaders, for example our assessment coordinator and other specialists use similar team approaches to guide district curriculum, instruction and assessment goals. Expert resources prepare staff and students for adjustments made at the state and federal levels or as curriculum materials are updated. By working as a unit, we use data to identify our needs and to build on our strengths in each grade level. Another example of expanded leadership is our unique approach within our guidance program. Our school counselor also serves as our school psychologist. This approach for serving DC West students proves to be invaluable as our counselor has established relationships with students through various support groups, example: circle of friends and guidance lessons. This proves to be a huge benefit as we hold parent meetings in our Student Assistance Team or MDT/IEP meetings.

Professional development is structured during our early dismissal times on Fridays, allowing our PLC groups to meet collaboratively. This predetermined time allows grade levels and teams across grade levels to vertically align and discuss curriculum and student achievement. Teachers also utilize a common plan time to assure that all students have the same opportunities to learn. DC West leadership has developed a culture in which all stakeholders feel they have a vested interest in the success of our students.

PART VIII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math	Test: Nebraska State Accountability (M-NeSA)
All Students Tested/Grade: 3	Edition/Publication Year: 2010
Publisher: Nebraska Department of Education/Data Recognition Corporation	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Meets Standards and above	91	87	86	84	100
Exceeds Standards	36	31	11	25	89
Number of students tested	44	62	36	51	41
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standards and above	85	80	83	73	11
Exceeds Standards	32	12	12	14	89
Number of students tested	19	25	17	22	18
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
3. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Meets Standards and above					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Meets Standards and above	93	87	88	87	12
Exceeds Standards	38	33	12	29	88
Number of students tested	40	57	33	45	41
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: The math standards were revised in 2010-2011. This assessment system replaced Nebraska's School-based Teacher-led assessment and Reporting System (STARS), where all schools created their own common district assessments. The 2009-2010 data reflects STARS data.
A new baseline for math was piloted in 2009-2010, so comparisons to previous student achievement data comparisons would not be appropriate.
NeSA baseline for math begins 2010-2011.
NeSA Alternate assessments were developed and piloted in the years 2009-2011.
Non-qualifying subgroups were not reported or made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Math	Test: Nebraska State Accountability (M-NeSA)
All Students Tested/Grade: 4	Edition/Publication Year: 2010
Publisher: Nebraska Department of Education/Data Recognition Corporation	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Meets Standards and above	95	92	100	94	88
Exceeds Standards	62	63	67	38	88
Number of students tested	69	35	48	50	50
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	100	100	100		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standards and above	92	88	100	92	20
Exceeds Standards	44	44	62	22	80
Number of students tested	25	18	21	23	20
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Meets Standards and above	77				
Exceeds Standards	23				
Number of students tested	13				
3. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Meets Standards and above	96	91	100	98	88
Exceeds Standards	65	62	74	39	88
Number of students tested	65	34	42	41	42
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: The math standards were revised in 2010-2011. This assessment system replaced Nebraska's School-based Teacher-led assessment and Reporting System (STARS), where all schools created their own common district assessments. The 2009-2010 data reflects STARS data.

A new baseline for math was piloted in 2009-2010, so comparisons to previous student achievement data comparisons would not be appropriate.

NeSA baseline for math begins 2010-2011.

NeSA Alternate assessments were developed and piloted in the years 2009-2011.

Non-qualifying subgroups were not reported or made public because fewer than 10 students were tested.

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA	Test: Nebraska State Accountability (R-NeSA)
All Students Tested/Grade: 3	Edition/Publication Year: 2009
Publisher: Nebraska Department of Education/Data Recognition Corporation	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Meets Standards and above	91	85	63	71	66
Exceeds Standards	41	32	19	10	21
Number of students tested	44	62	36	51	47
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standards and above	95	76	59	73	63
Exceeds Standards	21	20	24	0	16
Number of students tested	19	25	17	22	19
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Meets Standards and above				57	64
Exceeds Standards				21	9
Number of students tested				14	11
3. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Meets Standards and above	91	88	63	75	61
Exceeds Standards	43	35	21	11	21
Number of students tested	40	57	33	45	42
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					

NOTES:

STATE CRITERION--REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading/ELA	**Test:** Nebraska State Accountability (R-NeSA)
All Students Tested/Grade: 4	**Edition/Publication Year:** 2009
Publisher: Nebraska Department of Education/Data Recognition Corporation	

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Testing month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES*					
Meets Standards and above	89	80	65	60	100
Exceeds Standards	32	33	11	14	7
Number of students tested	63	64	56	65	74
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students tested with alternative assessment					
% of students tested with alternative assessment	3	2	0	1	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-Economic/ Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standards and above	88	77	55	48	84
Exceeds Standards	25	27	0	11	0
Number of students tested	32	22	22	27	19
2. Students receiving Special Education					
Meets Standards and above	80			18	90
Exceeds Standards	20			0	0
Number of students tested	10			11	20
3. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
4. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
5. African- American Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
6. Asian Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
7. American Indian or Alaska Native Students					

School Year	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012	2010-2011	2009-2010
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
8. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
9. White Students					
Meets Standards and above	88	79	71	67	94
Exceeds Standards	36	35	13	18	0
Number of students tested	50	57	38	49	51
10. Two or More Races identified Students					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
11. Other 1: Other 1					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
12. Other 2: Other 2					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					
13. Other 3: Other 3					
Meets Standards and above					
Exceeds Standards					
Number of students tested					

NOTES: