

U.S. Department of Education
2019 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 Dr. Barbara DeSpain

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

Official School Name Lois Lenski Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 6350 South Fairfax Way

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Centennial CO 80121-3514
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Arapahoe County

Telephone (303) 347-4575

Fax (303) 347-4580

Web site/URL

http://littletonpublicschools.net/scho
ols/lenski

E-mail bdespain@lps.k12.co.us

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

Date _____

(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Brian Ewert

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail bewart@lps.k12.co.us

District Name Littleton Public Schools District Tel. (303) 347-3300

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

Date _____

(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board

President/Chairperson Mr. Jack Reutzel

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

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

Date _____

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

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

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

Part I – Eligibility Certification

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

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 13 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 4 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 20 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
 - Rural or small city/town
3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	37	43	80
1	55	47	102
2	47	48	95
3	40	40	80
4	58	56	114
5	42	36	78
6	0	0	0
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	279	270	549

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 1 % Black or African American
 - 4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 86 % White
 - 6 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

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

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 3%

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

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	10
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	19
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	571
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

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

Russian, Indonesian, Spanish

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 4%
 Total number students who qualify: 24

8. Students receiving special education services: 6 %
31 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>2</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>3</u> Developmental Delay | <u>19</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>15</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 29
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	3
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	22
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	7
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	2
Student support personnel e.g., school 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 25:1

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

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

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

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

Yes No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2013

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

To help all student become better readers, writers, problem-solvers, and friends.

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

PART III – SUMMARY

Lois Lenski Elementary School, named after the famed children’s author, is a neighborhood school nestled beside a park among residential developments in Centennial, Colorado. Lenski’s 549 students come from six distinct neighborhoods, four of those within walking distance. In addition, 130 students chose to enroll at Lenski rather than their neighborhood school. In general, students come from middle and upper-class homes and live with both parents. Parents expect their children to receive a better than average education and are actively involved in making that happen.

Continuity of expectations, instruction, and success stems from the shared vision of all staff members. Dr. Barbara DeSpain, a twice-nominated National Distinguished Principal Award candidate, drives this vision. Keeping all stakeholders focused on excellent instruction, collaboration, and student achievement, she allows teacher leaders to step forward and move the staff toward the best instructional practices.

The ultimate goal at Lenski, and its mission statement, is to help all students become better readers, writers, problems solvers, and friends. Staff collaborates among grade levels in professional learning communities (PLCs), vertical teams, and with interventionists to develop rigorous, relevant and integrated instruction that allows students to improve regardless of their ability. Embedded professional development within PLCs ensures continuous growth for the teachers, and, therefore, students.

Our district’s instructional technology specialist had this to say:

"Lenski has all the positive characteristics of a collaborative student space that addresses equity through continuous conversations around student need and support that shows a high level of fidelity to the PLC (professional learning community) process and its reach to all staff to support all students. Learning from failure is a norm in the STEM space. Teachers and students alike see that the play they participate in to learn is always surrounded by failures. These failures are celebrated by students and are also celebrated by teachers. Lenski helps students connect and apply content in a new and creative way. The culture of collaboration and PLC work is pervasive throughout the school."

Parents, through monetary contributions for additional support staff and more than 300 volunteer hours each month, support the high expectations held for all children. Every year the community looks forward to activities such as Bingo Night and fourth-grade’s Famous Person performances. These activities keep families engaged and celebrating the learning process. Additionally, before and after school programs such as Math Olympiad; Mad Science; Bits, Bites, and Bots; Coding Club; Me, Myself, and My Health; performing arts; and chess club enhance the educational opportunities for all.

Lenski has had the continued honor and privilege of annually earning the John Irwin Schools of Excellence Award, Colorado’s award for academic success as shown by the state’s student performance program, for the past sixteen years. This award demonstrates our commitment to all students achieving their very best. We are proud to apply once again for the Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, having previously received the award in 1998 and in 2013.

Since our last recognition as a Blue Ribbon school, we have strived to maintain our high expectations while adapting to district-wide changes. All elementary schools have adopted three curriculum programs that have led us to alter our instructional practices to meet the needs of today’s students. Additionally, our school has downsized as retirees stay in their homes and fewer young families move into our surrounding neighborhoods. As a result, staff members are using the professional learning communities to work more efficiently since there is fewer support staff. The PLCs allow teachers to maximize each of their strength and the limited time available each day. Due to increasing social pressures, community suicide events, and an unfortunate shooting at a sister high school, we have increased our resources to support social-emotional welfare of our students. Daily instruction and intervention groups support students as they grow up in a more uncertain society.

Lois Lenski Elementary embodies the pride and spirit of the American public education system. Every aspect of the school and the supporting community is focused on providing the necessary tools for students

to succeed and reach their individual potential. Lenski, the author, based her award-winning books on the simple lives of everyday children. She wrote, “Only the rarest kind of best is good for the very young.” Lenski Elementary strives to honor these words by helping children grow, learn, and mature into confident, responsible, and contributing members of society.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

The Superkids Reading program is the core literacy curriculum taught in grades kindergarten through second-grade. The program is built on scientific research, proven pedagogy, and combines rigorous instruction with highly motivating materials. The scope and sequence of the program is not only research-based but is aligned with the Colorado State standards. The systematic instruction is a phonics based program that also incorporates phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. Through the program, children build skills in reading comprehension along with writing composition, grammar, handwriting, spelling, speaking and listening.

The intermediate grades use a balanced approach to literacy. A combination of interactive read aloud, shared reading, targeted instruction, independent reading, writing, and word study lay the foundation of instruction to help all students achieve the literacy Colorado Academic Standards.

Comprehensive assessments are given at the beginning, middle and end of the year as well as progress monitoring throughout each unit of study. Along with these assessments, students are also given the i-Ready assessment which tests the phonological awareness, phonics, high-frequency words, vocabulary, and reading comprehension three times a year. With this data, teachers are able to create small groups and target instruction. This targeted instruction occurs during a literacy block as well as What I Need time (WIN) as not to interfere with tier 1 instruction. Progress monitoring during this instruction gives teachers an idea of growth and allows for further individualized instruction. If students show areas of concern, they are referred to the building literacy specialist and a battery of assessments are given including the Phonological Awareness Skills Test, CORE phonics survey (letters, sounds, word reading), reading fluency, Rapid Automatic Naming assessment, as well as reading comprehension in order to determine areas of weakness and develop a tier 2 instructional plan for the student which often includes targeted small group instruction five days a week. The goal is to move students out of tier 2 instruction once skills are obtained.

1b. Mathematics:

Lenski uses Math Learning Center's Bridges and Number Corner as its base to assist all students in achieving grade-level mathematical state standards. The program's scope and sequence for each grade level ensure that students deeply understand multiple strategies for each concept. Students engage in mathematical inquiry by first using hands-on materials to gain a concrete understanding of a concept. Then, students move to pictorial representations before finally moving into the abstract understanding of algorithms and formulas. Games are utilized to provide ample practice in an engaging manner. Throughout instruction, inquiry, and practice, students verbalize their understanding and processes. This mathematical communication allows students to discover their misconceptions, work through confusion, and finally formalize their understanding.

To ensure all students are learning, a variety of systems are employed. At the beginning of each school year, teachers analyze data for student needs. By reviewing the Colorado Measures of Academic Standards and i-Ready assessments, teachers in grades second through fifth start each year by identifying students that need to be challenged and/or supported. Students that are ready to be advanced in their mathematical instruction are grouped together for fast-paced and/or grade-level advanced instruction. Students that need additional support, are clustered into classrooms based on similar needs.

Throughout the year, formative assessments are used to monitor student needs. For minor misconceptions or confusion, the teacher is able to provide flexible, small group instruction while others are playing the games to practice skills. For students that show larger misunderstandings, intervention materials from the Bridges program and/or Do the Math are used for small group instruction. These intervention groups last from a week to most of the year based on individual student needs. This additional instruction is during a

designated intervention block of time so that the students do not miss any instruction. Additional supports are provided through technology. Some teachers provide video lessons on their websites for students and parents to review concepts. Online programs such as i-Ready Instruction give students additional practice for specific concepts as needed.

1c. Science:

Lenski follows Colorado State Standards for science by implementing a balance of independent and collaborative learning. As part of a process to create an integrated approach, classroom teachers collaborate with specialists in technology, library media, art, and music to create a full day of connected studies for each student.

As an example of this approach to collaborate, students work independently and cooperatively to research and solve problems with Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) based projects. Fifth-grade students study engineering principles behind building skyscrapers, then build and test their own designs. They are encouraged to utilize concepts in everyday life and to collaborate with their peers during the project. Fourth-grade students tap into their engineering and design skills by building bridges. They study the historical progression of bridges through the ages and the impact of technology and machinery on improved safety. They also learn about electricity and utilize this knowledge to build increasingly complex circuits. Third-grade students delve into the rock cycle during a simulation in which they take matter through the stages of erosion, compaction, and cementation. Second-grade students learn to code and program robots to travel along student created maps of their community. First-grade students research animals and sort a variety of animals into classifications by their characteristics. Kindergarten students study animal habitats preceding a visit to the zoo to experience a variety of animals.

Teachers create and assess student learning throughout units of study allowing for the formative data to drive their classroom instruction. Science content is tested annually using the standardized Colorado Measure of Academic Success at the fifth-grade level. Lenski students consistently perform higher than district and state averages.

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

Experiential opportunities form the basis for students to experience how our communities' past, present, and future are connected to their lives and to create enthusiasm for learning and exploring while meeting the state's social studies standards. Fifth-grade students spend the entire year exploring the different concepts that come together to create financial literacy. They visit Young Ameritowne, a simulated mini town, in which students engage in free enterprise and economics. They choose careers and role-play ways in which their decisions affect themselves, their business, and the community as a whole. They bring these ideas to the entire school by creating a marketplace in which they market their handmade items and sell them to build their savings.

Fourth-grade students take a wide-ranging tour of their home state. They begin at the Capitol and learn about our state government. Then they traverse through the state's interesting heritage exploring prehistoric fossils at Dinosaur Ridge and experience the Gold Rush while sifting for gold at one of the state's working mines. These explorations help them to learn about the people who shaped Colorado. The students bring these people to life in a stage production of "Colorado's Famous People."

Second-grade students visit a local historical museum which highlights the western colonial period and how Colorado's original settlers lived. At school, they dress the part and travel back in time to replicate a colonial life by churning butter and hand sewing fabric during Colonial Day.

Kindergarten students learn all about the important people who help our community function properly. They get to visit and interview dentists, firemen, doctors, police officers while learning about their important roles in helping people in their community.

Teachers are constantly assessing student performance to direct instruction. Teacher-created assessments,
NBRS 2019

including projects and tests, are based on Colorado Academic Standards. These thoughtfully designed tools give teachers regular feedback to set student learning goals.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Students enjoy at least 45 minutes each day of a variety of subjects outside of their classrooms to help them become well-rounded individuals. These subjects add to the academic learning of students while allowing them to practice life skills.

Students further their learning about history through the cultural lens of art and music. Students learn about the lives and legacies of influential artists such as Georgia O’Keeffe and Pablo Picasso. Students look at the style of these artists and create their own artwork using similar style and elements. Performing arts programs integrate history standards by learning the songs, dances, and games of specific time periods. Second-grade students perform songs from local history, third-grade students learn about the many cultures that immigrated to our country, while fifth-grade students interact with the rich history of Colonial America.

The arts also promote further learning of key concepts. In art class, fifth-grade students expand their understanding of perspective from literature to drawing. Primary students develop their fine motor skills in art while also learning about color, shape, and proportion. As students learn to read and play percussion instruments, they are developing their understanding of mathematics in a real-world application.

Students acquire and apply knowledge regarding health habits, types of exercise, and goal setting in physical education. These skills reinforce state science standards and help students across grade levels establish healthy habits that will benefit them throughout their lives. The physical movement that physical education provides also helps students increase their ability to focus. Additionally, the numerous activities that promote students crossing the midline improves the communication between the two hemispheres of the brain across the corpus callosum. These neural pathways help students learn to read, write, and attend.

The library media teachers focus on making sure all students grasp the essential skills and knowledge needed to enrich and extend their classroom learning environment. Library visits include learning experiences connected to classroom content using print and digital materials. The librarian focuses on reading promotion and research skills that expand students’ learning beyond the classroom into their own research and projects. For example, third-grade students working on an immigration unit in the classroom are introduced to the historical fiction genre in the library and encouraged to check out books related to the time period of study. Fifth-grade students studying energy along with renewable and nonrenewable resources in their science class will read eBooks and research hydroelectric power in the library. Additionally, the library staff has arranged for multiple best selling authors to engage our students with their love of reading, the writing process, and the inspiration behind their creativity.

Students visit our STEM/technology lab to focus on digital citizenship, mastering the Google suite of apps for education, coding, and other hands-on projects based on state standards and curricular units of study in the classroom. For example, in the technology lab, first-grade students use digital and print media resources to research about reindeer. In their classroom, they use their notes to write a paragraph of their findings. Back in the lab, they publish their paragraph in a slideshow with illustrations of their own creation. As a finale, pairs of students collaborate to design and build a sleigh with makerspace materials, then program an Ozobot “reindeer” to pull their hand-built sleigh.

Students and staff strive to create a safe and supportive learning community where students can be happy

and successful learners. We prioritize social and emotional learning through which children understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. The Second Step program, a universal classroom-based curriculum, is research-based and designed to increase students' self-regulation and school success by teaching students how to focus attention, remember directions, stay on task, handle emotional challenges, as well as get along with teachers and other students. As a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports school, we reinforce social-emotional learning school-wide by using consistent language and problem-solving strategies in common areas throughout the school.

Throughout all of these locations and lessons, students are learning and using the essential life skills of listening, teamwork, interpersonal communication, persistence, and following directions. As a school, every teacher strives to help every student be a successful member of our community of learners.

3. Special Populations:

Lenski uses a variety of methods to meet the needs of all students. We have a gifted and talented program for 14% of the population, special education services for 6% of the population, and scheduled intervention and enrichment blocks for all students.

Students that are identified as mathematically gifted are typically grade accelerated in mathematics using the Bridges curriculum for second- through fourth-grade math classes and Connected Math for the accelerated fifth-grade math students. They also complete monthly national Math Olympiad activities. Students identified as gifted in reading are challenged weekly with advanced resources including Jacob's Ladder Fiction and Nonfiction Programs, The Center for Gifted Education at the College of William and Mary materials and Depth and Complexity activities. Students are also exposed to activities including Chess Club, Battle of the Books, Know Brainer Trivia Competitions, school and district Spelling Bees, and district math competitions. Beyond these specific enrichments, classroom teachers encourage students to stretch their higher level thinking skills within the grade-level content.

For students that require specialized instruction due to their disability, instruction focuses on using multiple modalities. In mathematics, students remain in the concrete phase using manipulatives much longer to ensure conceptual understanding before moving to the represental then the abstract phases. The intervention materials in Bridges and Do the Math allow students to gain more experience in their areas of concern while continuing to receive grade-level instruction.

Programs such as Wilson, Story Grammar Marker, and Orton-Gillingham provide the same type of multi-sensory instruction for literacy. Phonics and phonological awareness instruction are provided to strengthen the literacy foundation of students regardless of their grade level. These skills allow students to read and spelling more fluently. All of these services are provided in a small group setting and/or support within the regular classroom.

We utilize the two-prong approach of Response to Intervention (RtI) and What I Need (WIN) to address the needs of individual students. The RtI team reviews student achievement and performance to ensure that students are receiving the supports they need to be successful. After introducing a variety of accommodations and/or interventions, the team reviews the level of success of those actions then determines the next steps. Required actions can revolve around supporting the executive functioning of a student or providing intensive instruction to remediate a deficit or arranging a social support group or extended time and/or oral presentations for assessments.

As part of the professional learning communities (PLCs), teachers determine which students need additional time to master a concept, have already mastered it, or need some type of intervention to do so. The small group needs within a classroom or a grade-level are then addressed during What I Need (WIN) time. This block of time planned into the master schedule allows students to get the support they need as it arises. For example in fifth-grade, students that struggled to grasp the main idea in reading a short piece were provided small group, differentiated instruction while those students that had already mastered that skill were instructed in central idea of longer pieces.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Lenski uses Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to create a school climate in which students feel respected, responsible, and safe. When students are secure in their social-emotional health, they are able to achieve more academically. All students are taught behavioral expectations in all-school assemblies and in individual classrooms. When staff sees positive behavior, the students are rewarded for this behavior with a golden ticket and a chance to win a prize as well as be recognized with a photo displayed in the front lobby. More importantly, these positive behaviors create a learning environment that accepts everyone's unique gifts.

Classroom teachers also support students by utilizing the curriculum Second Step during daily community time. Through this curriculum, ALL students and staff at Lenski use a common language when learning and applying strategies in social-emotional situations.

Additionally, through the PBIS leadership team and the Student Intervention Team (SIT), some students are identified as needing extra social-emotional supports. These students are often provided with small group instruction that strengthens specific skills (i.e. friendship, anxiety, conflict resolution). Others are provided check-outs at the end of the day where they are able to connect with an adult to cultivate a relationship and receive daily feedback to improve social-emotional health. These multiple support systems enable social-emotional growth and increased academic success.

To promote a sense of community, many structures are in place. The Student Leadership organization promotes a variety of community outreach campaigns throughout the year to support those less fortunate. Spirit Days help us share in common celebrations and have fun together. Buddy classes allow older students to be role models for students in a younger class while participating in fun, academic activities. To support teachers in their craft, our Instructional Coach meets with teachers as individuals and in small groups to support them in any capacity. Leadership teams provide lunches and snacks in order to boost morale and help teachers feel supported in all they do. Our principal does all she can to ensure that teachers and students have all that they need in materials and supplies. The parent community provides support to teachers through their volunteering in and out of the classroom.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Lenski has prioritized the importance of family and community engagement in several ways. First, the ongoing relationship with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is vital in the success of the school. With the help of the PTO, we have the coordination of volunteers for events and programs in the school. Examples include testing the students on the district's Vision and Hearing bus, a blood drive with Children's Hospital, volunteers for the school library, trained parent volunteers for small literacy groups to assist teachers, and a running club for the students during recess. Along with the renowned Littleton Public School Security department, we are piloting a "Watchdog" program for the district to train volunteers for assistance during high traffic times as children begin and end the school day. Once this program moves beyond the pilot phase, this program will be rolled out to the district's other elementary schools.

Parental support is also critical in reaching our goals as a school. Our Technology Committee comprised of parents and staff work toward implementing the latest technology trends and enrichment ideas for students. The Lenski Accountability Committee, comprised of the principal, school staff, parents, and community members, monitor the school's improvement goals. Achieving our goal of timely, consistent communication, Lenski's updated website and social media presence are thanks to a dedicated web specialist. Additionally, the Lenski Wednesday Announcements are emailed to parents with activities and upcoming events. Teachers also provide weekly communication on classroom events and achievements.

The biggest impact of the PTO is the fundraising that is done in conjunction with surrounding businesses who contribute to funding for Lenski. This continued effort allows Lenski to thrive with additional

resources for the library, the technology lab, STEM materials, staff for the playground, small group instruction, and smaller class sizes.

Furthermore, the Lenski community is active in district events which expands the community outreach. We have won the highest participation for several years in a row at The Littleton Stride, a 5k and family run which is an event that brings together students, parents, teachers, staff, and neighborhoods from the entire district. The funds raised at the event go to the district's foundation for teacher requested grants and district-wide initiatives. You will find many families in attendance at the district sponsored nights for the Denver Nuggets, Avalanche, or Colorado Rockies games. Lenski parents sit on the Littleton Public Schools Foundation Board, the fundraising arm for the district, the District Accountability Committee, the District Dyslexia Task Force, the Gifted and Talented Board, and the District Technology Committee. Having parent involvement and community buy-in has been the cornerstone of our school's success.

3. Professional Development:

Our key professional development strategy is the professional learning communities (PLCs). Each and every week grade-level teachers meet for an hour to review PLC's four key questions: What do want our students to know and be able to do? How will we know if they can? How will support students who are not learning? How will we challenge students who already know it? These meetings revolve around student data and student learning goals. Teachers share techniques that are working, pose concerns, trade strategies, and focus on student achievement. Recently, the primary teachers met as a vertical team to discuss the writing needs of students. The curriculum program SuperKids was not preparing students for the writing rigor within the third-grade curriculum of ReadyGen. As a result, these teacher identified areas of instructional needs at each grade-level, analyzed materials and strategies to support those needs, then modified their units of study to meet student current and future needs.

Our district provides ongoing professional development for our literacy and mathematics programs. Each year training to promote the most effective use of the curriculum programs are provided for teachers. Currently, Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling is being dispersed to primary teachers to enhance literacy instruction. This intensive training is allowing teachers to understand brain development and its role in literacy development. This training is allowing teachers to make better-informed decisions within their instructional practices to best meet the diverse needs of their students while utilizing district chosen materials.

Often teachers return from a conference excited to share what they've learned. Our technology teacher and instructional coach brought BrainPop, a technology-based learning tool, to us last summer. After formal training in the full extent of the tool, teachers are now able to enhance student learning. Some teachers are using it as additional exposure to difficult concepts, others are providing enrichment for gifted students, and others are using it a key component to content instruction. Our literacy specialist returned from a conference on dyslexia with a writing technique that could benefit all students. After a district-provided dyslexia simulation, the technique was presented to the staff by our instructional coach. The technique is showing great promise in helping our students improve their written expression that has historically shown as an area of need on the state assessments. Students are having better success in responding to text-based questions using this technique.

4. School Leadership:

Lenski implements a shared-leadership model. All stakeholders work in close collaboration to create an engaging environment for students to feel welcome and engage in the learning process.

The heart of our school is our principal. She embraces and serves a community that values participation in shaping the overall direction of the school and is actively involved in the day-to-day life of the school. Her energetic, caring approach to the education of our students is reflected in the ongoing, outstanding success that Lenski students have achieved.

An important part of this success is to involve in-house expertise in the decision-making process. Two of

the fifth-grade teachers are consulted on science initiatives due to their experience and wealth of knowledge. Similarly, a kindergarten and a third-grade teacher are utilized for literacy matters and a second and a fourth-grade teacher are called upon for technology integration. The Leadership Team (LT) is a further example of exercising the strengths of the staff in a cross-functional team that includes the following resources. Our literacy specialist, and dean, truly understanding the needs of our youngest and most at-risk students provides the principal with that viewpoint. The instructional coach supplies the perspective of data-driven, analytical focus to pinpoint instructional strategies that produce high student achievement. The office manager includes the day-to-day mechanisms of running a school. The technological needs and flexible thinking are contributed to the principal through our instructional technology paraprofessional. The two classroom teachers keep the LT grounded in reality and practicality.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) leadership is vital in the success of the school. These parents fundraise and coordinate volunteers for community building events and programs in the school and organize activities for strengthening the bonds of the Lenski community. They leverage their “real-world” expertise to facilitate student learning in the rapidly evolving world.

Students at Lenski also exhibit strong leadership skills. Student representatives from intermediate grades serve as role models for the entire student body as they meet to organize activities that promote positive behavior initiatives. They also promote spirit days and community service projects such as Pennies for Patients. Throughout the year these students collaborate with teachers and the principal to create an environment of support, kindness, and leadership.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Children, and their needs, are the focus at Lenski. We take great care in pairing students with the right learning environment. We strive to ensure that students are placed with classmates and teachers that will provide the support, encouragement, and challenge necessary for positive growth academically and socially.

At the beginning of the year, teachers begin to learn the personalities and strengths of their students. Discovering who is bold or shy, competitive or relaxed, confident or anxious helps teachers design instruction to fit the needs of the students. The curriculum and past academic performance is the foundation that teachers use to build classroom lessons and activities to meet the needs of their students.

Over the course of the year, teachers have constant conversations about the needs of their students with all stakeholders -- child, parent, colleagues, support staff, and principal. Through these conversations, insight is gained in a variety of ways. Another teacher may hold valuable information about the family dynamics that sheds a new perspective on a student's behaviors. A parent might provide a familial history of academic struggles. A friend might reveal a child's hidden gift in acting. The playground supervisors might notice the peacemaking skills of an often overlooked student. The physical education teacher might discover leadership skills that might go undiscovered in the classroom. The conversations teachers have in the lunchroom, in the hallways, or on duty help to paint a fuller picture of each child. As the teachers get to know each individual, they become more effective in delivering the kind of education that is needed. And when necessary, acquiring the appropriate support for students.

By the spring, the relationships that were cultivated over the year are bearing fruit. Shy and anxious students are speaking out more in class since all contributes are honored and mistakes are celebrated for their learning potential. Once defiant students are now excelling academically to please their biggest fan, their teacher. Cliques are crumbling to the positive force of inclusion. The most difficult students to reach are a step closer to a breakthrough since no adult has given up on them.

Students at Lenski are able to achieve academically because the adults that surround them believe they can succeed. We only need to discover their path to greatness.